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To

Sir Wm. Hooker,

from the superintendent

Royal Gardens Kew

Pembroke Dock 18th Sept 1839

Пётр

A MEMOIR

OF

THE LIFE

OF

PETER THE GREAT.

The Second Edition.

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PREFACE.

The Author or Compiler of the following Biographical Memoir has done little more than bring together and arrange the scattered fragments of Histories, Lives, Anecdotes, and Notices, in manuscript or in print, of one of the most extraordinary Characters that ever appeared on the great theatre of the world, in any age or country;—a Being full of contradictions, yet consistent in all that he did; a promoter of literature, arts and sciences, yet without education himself; the civiliser of his people, "he gave a polish," says Voltaire, "to his nation, and was himself a savage;" he taught his people the art of war, of which he was himself ignorant; from the first glance of a small cock-boat, at the distance of five hundred miles from the nearest sea, he became an expert ship-builder, created a powerful fleet, partly constructed with his own hands, made himself an active and expert sailor, a skilful pilot, a great captain: in short, he changed the manners, the

habits, the laws of the people, and the very face of the country.

A modern French writer has given a catalogue of no less than ninety-five authors who have treated of Peter the Great, and concludes it with three &c.'s. About one-fourth of that number may have been consulted on the present occasion, of which the principal ones are the following :—

Journal de Pièrre le Grand, depuis l'année 1698, *jusqu'à la Conclusion de la Paix de Neustadt. Ecrit par Lui-même.*—This remarkable work was intended to have been published, after the death of Peter, by his surviving spouse the Empress Catharine, but it is supposed her short reign put a stop to it. Her namesake, Catharine II., however, caused it to be published at Petersburg in the year 1770, and it was translated and published at Berlin in 1773. It contains a journal of all his military movements, battles, sieges, distribution of his forces, triumphs, promotions,—and, in short, all the principal transactions in which he was engaged during the period mentioned in the title-page. The simplicity of the narrative, the frank avowal of the mistakes he committed, the gratitude he constantly expresses to the Supreme Disposer of events, in his reverses as well as in his successes—all prove the perfect sincerity as well as the truth of the narrative. To the his-

torian of his military progress and conquests, this journal of the Emperor must always be invaluable.

The History of Peter the Great, Emperor of Russia. By Alexander Gordon of Achintoul, several years a Major-general in the Tzar's service.—General Gordon was personally acquainted with many of the exploits of the Tzar Peter narrated in his history. He received a commission from him as major about the year 1693 or 1694, was speedily promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and was present at the taking of Azoph in 1698. He was taken prisoner at the battle of Narva, and sent into Sweden, where he was detained for several years. On his return, he was advanced to the rank of major-general, and sent into Poland; but on hearing of his father's death, he obtained permission in 1711 to quit the Russian service and return to his native country, Scotland. That portion only of his work, therefore, which relates to the period when he was actually in service can be considered as valuable; the rest is founded on authorities already published at the time of his writing.

Travels from St. Petersburg in Russia to various parts of Asia. By John Bell of Antermony.—Honest John Bell is almost proverbially known as the most faithful of travellers. In the

year 1719 he was attached, in a medical capacity, to an embassy sent by Peter the Great to Kang-hee Emperor of China, and published a very interesting account of the journey and the transactions of the mission in Pekin. In the year 1722 he accompanied the army of Russia, under the immediate command of the Tzar Peter, to the shores of the Caspian, of which journey he published a "Succinct Relation," containing some curious and interesting incidents, relating to that campaign, connected with the manners and character of Peter and Catharine, who accompanied him.

Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce, Esq., a military Officer in the services of Prussia, Russia, and Great Britain; containing an Account of his Travels, &c.; as also several very interesting private anecdotes of the Tzar Peter I. of Russia.—Mr. Bruce tells us his Journal was originally written in German, his native language*, and that in the year 1755, on his retirement, he translated it into English. In 1782 it was published for the benefit of his widow. Captain Bruce had many opportunities of seeing and knowing a great deal of the Tzar and his family. He served as military instructor to the son of the unfortunate Tzarovitz Alexis, was aid-de-camp to General Weyde, and

* His father was in the service of Prussia, where he was born.

accompanied the Tzar on his expedition to the shores of the Caspian, which sea he circumnavigated, and surveyed its coasts. His narrative is written with great simplicity, if not with scrupulous accuracy,—the language being somewhat loose, and the dates not always correct. There are several passages in his book which must have been transcribed, either by himself or his publisher, from preceding authors; but those portions which describe what he witnessed in his own person are highly interesting, and worthy of all credit.

Mémoires du Règne de Pierre le Grand, Empereur de Russie, Père de la Patrie, &c. Par le Boyar Iwan Nestesuranoi. 4 *vols. Amsterdam*, 1726.—Though this work bears a fictitious name, it is, notwithstanding, perfectly genuine and authentic; and being published in the year after the death of Peter the Great, and while Catharine and Menzikoff were still living, it may be considered the very first History of Peter the Great, with the exception of some brief notices by Webber. Nestesuranoi is meant as the anagram of Jean Rousset, his real name. This gentleman fled from France to Amsterdam, on the revocation of the Edict of Nantz. He was a most indefatigable compiler, journalist, historian, politician, and controversialist. For his History of the Life of Peter, he was

made by the court of Russia a councillor of the imperial chancery; and for taking up the cause of the Prince of Orange, was created councillor extraordinary and historiographer to the Stadtholder.

The History of the Life of Peter I., Emperor of Russia. By John Mottley, Esq.—John Mottley was the son of Colonel Mottley, who followed the fortunes of King James II. into France; and who from writing miscellaneous and dramatic pieces for his amusement, was, in consequence of his father's misfortunes, compelled to use his pen for a maintenance; and his productions met with the patronage of Queen Caroline and the court. His Life of Peter the Great is, in many parts of it, a translation of the work of Nestesuranoi, with the addition of several incidents and anecdotes, and also of many official and other documents, compiled from the journals of the day. It went through two editions,—the first, a folio, in one volume; the second, a small octavo, in three volumes.

History of the Russian Empire under Peter the Great. By M. de Voltaire.—This celebrated writer would appear to have been unjustly censured with regard to this history: it has been called a romance, a tissue of idle stories and anecdotes not founded in fact, and a systematic suppression of the truth. In the perusal of a multitude of authors, the compiler can safely assert that, as far as concerns the

facts stated by Voltaire, he has authority for all of them; his opinions are, of course, his own. But he is accused by the Russians of not having made use of half the manuscripts he received by order of the Empress Catharine. The chamberlain, Schowalof, demanded of him by letter,—1st. Why he had only made use of so small a portion of the rich material sent to him?—2nd. Why he had mutilated the facts stated in the manuscripts; and why he had not made use of the anecdotes (Stæhlin's) in his possession? And 3rd. Why he had omitted the names of several great persons, and so disfigured those he had been pleased to name, that they were scarcely to be distinguished as the persons intended?

To the first question Voltaire answered, that it was not his custom to copy implicitly any manuscripts that might be sent to him. To the second, that he must be governed by the best information he could procure; that the private life of Peter did not come within the limits of his plan, and consequently the anecdotes were not available; and, as to the third reproach, he sarcastically obseves, "as far as relates to the *disfiguring* of the proper names, I suppose it is a German who reproaches me with it.—I wish him more wit and fewer consonants."

The Journal of Peter the Great was sent to

Voltaire in manuscript, and whenever he has made use of it he has done so faithfully and accurately. But he is highly blamable in casting a stigma on what he calls "pretended histories of Peter the Great, most of which have been compiled from gazettes;" and his designating "that which was printed at Amsterdam, in four volumes, under the name of the Boyar Nestesuranoi," as "one of those impositions too frequently practised by booksellers." The name is certainly an imposition, as we have noticed; but all the documents it contains, and the history connected with, and drawn from, those documents, is authentic. But that which renders Voltaire the more blamable in his censure is, that the foundation of his own history, the arrangement, and in many places the language, are drawn from this said work of Nestesuranoi, and his copyist Colonel John Mottley. This is disingenuous, and unworthy the high character of Voltaire.

Rusland en de Nederlanden Beschoud in derselver Wederkeerige Betrekkingen door Mr. Jacobus Scheltema. 4 *vols.*—These volumes contain chiefly an historical account of the commercial intercourse between Holland and Russia, from its commencement to the death of Peter the Great. This work is chiefly interesting from the details

given of the conduct and proceedings of this extraordinary man during his residence in Holland, taken from authentic documents, and particularly from *Noomen's Diary of the Residence of the Tzar Peter at Zaandam.* It does not appear to have been translated either into French or English.

Original Anecdotes of Peter the Great, collected from the Conversation of several Persons of Distinction at Petersburg and Moscow. By M. Stæhlin, Member of the Imperial Academy at Petersburg.—About ten years after the death of Peter the Great, that is in the year 1735, M. Stæhlin was invited to fill a seat in the Academy of Sciences at Petersburg. He lived at the house of the Count of Lynar, envoy-extraordinary from King Augustus of Poland to the court of Russia, where he tells us he became acquainted with many persons of distinction, as well foreigners as Russians, several of whom had not only served in the fleet and army, or held civil employments under Peter the Great, but had also been much about his person. He was likewise honoured with the appointment of tutor, and afterwards librarian, to the Great Duke Peter Feodorovitz. These situations afforded him opportunities of collecting anecdotes concerning the

manners, character, and actions, both as regarded the public and private life of the Tzar Peter; they amount in number to more than one hundred, many of which are highly interesting, and well vouched for by most respectable authorities.

In addition to these, were consulted, *the Travels of Mr. Coxe; the History of Russia by Tooke; La Biographie Universelle*, the works of *Le Général Comte de Segur, La Combe, Fontenelle, Levesque*, &c., from which such passages only were selected as tended to confirm the statements made by other authorities. It will be obvious that, out of such a mass of materials, and in so small a volume, the great leading points only of the Life and Transactions of such a personage as PETER THE GREAT could be comprehended, and of these, few, it is hoped, will be found to have been omitted.

A

MEMOIR OF THE LIFE

OF

PETER THE GREAT.

CHAPTER I.

The Birth of the Tzar Peter I.—The Intrigues of his Family — Revolt of the Strelitzes or Russian Janissaries — The Regency of Sophia—The Tzar ascends the throne.

We shall certainly not err in pronouncing the Tzar Peter I. of Russia to have been one of the most extraordinary men that ever appeared in any age or country; but whether he merited the title of Great, which his own countrymen have bestowed on him, and the rest of Europe has sanctioned, it would seem to be necessary to know, in the first place, something of the state of the country, to which he was by universal admission a benefactor, when he first began to govern it, and the state in which he left it; and, in the second place, what were the means employed, and the resources at his command, by which he was enabled to extend its limits, to secure its peace, and to improve the condition and raise the moral qualities of his subjects.

In the review which is now proposed to be taken of the life of this extraordinary man, the latter point will be fully explained by the acts he performed and the regulations he established. The means he employed to attain his ends were sometimes severe and unsparing enough, but, in general, only where severity appeared to be necessary. If, however, heroic exploits, chivalrous adventures, and hazardous enterprises, undertaken with the view of gratifying personal vanity or ambition, or of exciting mere admiration, be thought essential to the composition of a great character, Peter I. will have no chance of competing, in these respects, with "the Macedonian madman or the Swede." In him we neither find the boundless but barren ambition of the one, nor the desperate and fatal obstinacy of the other. "It has been settled in men's minds," says Voltaire, "that Charles XII. was worthy of having the first post in the army under Peter the Great—the one has left nothing behind him but ruins—the other is, in every respect, the founder of an empire." In fact, the ambition of Peter extended not beyond the improvement and prosperity of his country, for which he laboured incessantly through a life of restless activity. Russia was to him all in all; her welfare and her glory engaged his daily thoughts; and those excesses and little eccentricities which appear childish and frivolous, as well as those more serious and opposite acts of severity, which all must condemn, had each of them a motive pointing to some end, and that generally a benevolent one. In the execution of his great designs for the improvement of his country, no difficulties nor

dangers ever stood in his way; his indefatigable activity—the perseverance and intrepidity which enabled him to overcome all obstacles, and brave the most imminent perils—and all for the love of country—are the proud qualifications that entitle him to the name of GREAT.

With regard to the state of Russia, before and at the time of Peter, it will only be necessary to turn to the pages of every writer, from Hakluyt down to that period, to be satisfied of the extreme ignorance and barbarism of Muscovy. A glimmering of light may be said to have broken in during the reign of Alexis Michaelovitz, (the father of Peter the Great,) who died in 1676. He was one of the best princes that had sat on the throne of Muscovy. The establishment of some of the principal manufactures was begun during his reign; he added the fine provinces of Plescow and Smolensko to his dominions; he reformed the laws, and reduced them to something like a code; he curbed the ambition of the patriarch, who arrogantly claimed to have the highest seat in council; and he opposed the usurpations of the church. He endeavoured to introduce a regular system of military tactics and discipline into the army, through the means of the foreign generals Gordon, Leslie, and Dalziel. He was fully sensible of the benefits to be derived from the superior knowledge of foreign officers and artificers. Among the latter were some Dutch ship-builders, who met with great encouragement; for he cherished the ambition of making Russia a maritime power, and of forming fleets on the Black Sea and the Caspian. Thus then Alexis may be said to have laid the foundation on which

Peter erected his own and his country's glory. Most of his schemes however failed, from the opposition they met with from the barbarous natives, who had an inveterate dislike to foreigners and foreign institutions. By means of some Germans and Italians he made an attempt to establish silk and cotton manufactories, which also failed; but he was more successful in sending several Polish, Swedish, and Tartar prisoners of war to cultivate lands on the banks of the Volga. This prince was twice married, first to a daughter of the Boyar Milovslanski, and secondly to a beautiful young lady of the family of Nariskin, by whom he had Peter, the subject of this Memoir, and a daughter. The circumstances which led to this marriage, and the manner in which candidates for becoming brides were at that time exhibited for selection, will show the low state in which the female part of society was then held by the Muscovites.

The Boyar Matveof, minister for foreign affairs, was honoured with the particular confidence of Alexis. The latter going one evening to his house without attendants, as was frequently his custom, found the table covered, and said to Matveof in a familiar way, "Your supper looks so inviting that it tempts me to partake of it, but it must be on condition that nothing be altered on my account." He was scarcely seated when the wife of Matveof made her appearance followed by her only son and a young lady. The Tzar insisted on their sitting down, though contrary to the usual custom, and the young lady was placed opposite the royal guest. He observed her with

great attention, and then said, "I thought your son was your only child." "Your Majesty," said the minister, "is right; this young lady is the daughter of Kyrilla Nariskin, a relation and friend, who lives on his own estate; my wife has undertaken her education, and, with the blessing of God, we hope to settle her honourably in the world."

The family having retired, the Tzar observed to the minister that he ought to think of a suitable match for the young lady. The minister replied that, although endowed with good and amiable qualities, she was far from being rich, and that his own circumstances would not allow him to give her any considerable portion. Some days after this, the Tzar returned to the subject of the young lady, and told Matveof he had found a gentleman who might probably be agreeable to her; one not destitute of merit, and who besides needed no fortune with his wife; "one (he added) who is already in love with your ward, and wishes to marry and make her happy." Matveof of course was anxious to know who this suitor was; and after some further discourse on the subject, the Tzar said, "Well, Matveof, you may tell the young lady it is I who am in love with her, and am determined to make her my wife."

The minister, thunderstruck at so unexpected a declaration, fell at the feet of the Tzar, and entreated his Majesty, for the love of God, not to think of it; said that he had many enemies at court who already beheld with envious eyes the particular marks of kindness with which his Majesty deigned to honour him; that their jealousy

would be evinced if, to the mortification of all the noble families, his Majesty should condescend to marry so humble a girl who was under his care. The Tzar told him he had nothing to fear; that his determination was taken and would not be altered. "Since then it is so," said Matveof, "I have one favour to beg, as well for the sake of Natalia as for myself, which is, that you will not carry your wishes into execution without conforming to the usual customs of the country, and thus saving appearances; assemble at your court the daughters of the most distinguished families, among whom Natalia will be present, and let your Majesty's choice be made in public." The Tzar approved his minister's advice, and promised to follow it.

A few weeks after this, Alexis declared, before his assembled ministers, and to the heads of the clergy, his intention of making a second marriage, and ordered them to call together the unmarried daughters of the principal nobility, in order that he might make his choice. About sixty young ladies of high birth and great beauty were assembled, adorned, as may well be supposed, in all the splendour of dress and decoration, but Natalia Nariskin was the lady selected and raised at once to the throne. This event took place at Moscow in September 1670 *.

The Tzar Alexis, at his death in 1676, left two sons, Theodore and John, and four daughters, Sophia, Catharine, Mary and Sediassa, by his first

* Stœhlin's Original Anecdotes. Communicated by the Countess Roumanzoff, grand-daughter to Matveof.

wife; and one son and one daughter, Peter, and Natalia Alexowna, by the second, above mentioned. Theodore, his eldest son, succeeded to the throne; but being of a weak constitution and subject to disease, his life was considered likely to be of short duration. It was the general custom, at that time, to send the female issue to pass their lives in a convent; but the Princess Sophia, a lady of a masculine spirit and great penetration, foreseeing what might happen, and that her brother John, being afflicted with epileptic fits and other infirmities, was wholly unfit to assume the reins of government, in the event of the demise of Theodore, conceived a plan to escape from the convent. In order to secure a better opportunity of carrying her scheme into effect, she represented to the ministers the unhappy condition of her brother Theodore, and the cruelty of being shut up at a distance from one whom she so tenderly loved, when suffering on a bed of sickness. Under this pretence of sisterly affection and zeal she was permitted to leave the convent; and by her unremitting attention to her brother, her insinuating manners, and affable behaviour to the persons about the court, she became an universal favourite; in short, being, as Gordon says, "of a superior but dangerous genius," she soon found herself in a fair way to the assumption, in her own person, of the supreme authority. As the most certain means of forwarding her views, she selected Prince Galitzin for the head of her party,—a man of great ability, and as artful and intriguing as his protectress. Supported by her influence, he found means to carry on the affairs of government, during the reign of Theo-

dore, which closed by his death in 1682, in the twenty-second year of his age. Leaving no issue behind him, and deeming his own brother John, on account of his many infirmities, wholly unfit for the responsibilities of Empire, he had been advised to name for his successor on the throne his half brother Peter, who, though only ten years of age, had already given indication of his masculine character.

Sophia, enraged at her own brother being thus set aside, formed a bold design, at the head of which she engaged in her service Couvanski, the general of the Strelitzes. This corps, if a turbulent and undisciplined gang of armed men deserve to be so called, bore a close resemblance to the Janissaries of the Turks, or the Prætorian Guards of Rome; and, like them, could create or depose a sovereign according to their good will and pleasure. With a view to exasperate the people, and the Strelitzes in particular, a rumour was industriously spread abroad, by the satellites of Galitzin and Couvanski, that the Tzar Theodore had been poisoned. The Strelitzes being called together, were addressed by Couvanski, whose speech excited these rabble troops to the highest pitch of fury. They forthwith murdered the two physicians who had attended the deceased Tzar; and having accomplished this, the next step was to mark out several of the chief officers of the crown for destruction; some of whom were actually thrown over the balustrade of the imperial palace, and received on the pikes of the soldiers. The Princess Dolgorouki and Matveof, Nariskin, the brother of the young Tzarina, Prince Soltikoff, and

many other persons of distinction, that had made themselves obnoxious to the Strelitzes, or to Sophia, were put to death by them; several even of their own colonels and other officers, who were not in favour with the rabble, fell by their hands. It is stated by General Alexander Gordon, and other writers, that this affair originated in the colonels having refused the pay due to these troops, and that, on this account, they inflicted the *battogues* on nine of these officers, a punishment which is precisely the *bambooing* of the Chinese; and the sufferers, in both of them, are obliged to thank their executioners.

It was suggested, as the only means of arresting this bloody tumult, that the unfortunate Prince John, so grievously incapacitated for a throne—(since he was nearly blind, could hardly articulate, and had been from infancy subject to epileptic fits)—should, nevertheless, be proclaimed Tzar conjointly with his brother Peter. As soon as the horrible massacre had terminated, the two young princes were proclaimed joint Sovereigns, and Sophia as Regent; and this ambitious lady seated herself between the two mock sovereigns,—an idiot and a child. Voltaire says she approved of these outrages, conferred rewards on the officers of the Strelitzes, by bestowing on the murderers the estates of the murdered and proscribed; that she allowed them to erect a monument, on which an inscription recorded the names of those they had massacred, and who were represented thereon as traitors to their country; and that she caused a ukase to be published, in which these murderous wretches were thanked for their zeal and fidelity.

General Alexander Gordon, a decided partisan of Peter, is the principal accuser of Sophia in this affair, in which there are some grounds for inferring she had no concern, at least in its commencement, and that the revolt of the Strelitzes was chiefly occasioned, as he himself states, by large arrears of pay due, as well as by their hatred of many of their superior officers*. When the terror and dismay had subsided, a council was assembled, at which most of the nobles were present, when it was determined to punish the authors of this daring rebellion; the result of which was, that the most active among the officers and their abettors, and near two thousand of the soldiers, who had been decimated, were put to death.

When these horrors first burst forth, the two Princes, John and Peter, fled with their mother and sister, and the family of the Nariskins, to the Troitski or Trinity Convent, about fifteen leagues from Moscow, where some German officers and soldiers were sent for their protection. It is stated by several authors that two of the Strelitzes dashed after the fugitives into the convent, and that one of them, with uplifted sword, was about to smite young Peter, who with his mother had taken refuge by the altar; but his companion exclaimed—"Comrade, not before the altar!" This merciful man would appear to have been actuated less by feelings of humanity than of early prejudice, which had taught him to respect the sanctity of the place.

Sophia all this time kept quiet, and managed

* Gordon's Hist. of Peter the Great.

matters so well as to escape detection, if not suspicion. She had now, indeed, nearly reached the height of her ambition, by being placed in the enjoyment of all the honour and the power of sovereignty; her bust was stamped on the public coin; her hand was put to all despatches; she had the first seat in council; and her sway might be said to be without controul. She procured a wife for her brother John, from the house of Soltikoff, one of the family of him who was murdered. The marriage took place at Moscow in 1684. Scarcely had this ceremony been concluded, when another conspiracy was formed by Couvanski, who, as in like cases not unfrequently happens, found himself neglected by Sophia, from the moment she had attained her present elevation, to which he had in so essential a manner contributed. It was even said that he aimed at nothing less than her hand, as the first step to the imperial dignity; and that, in order the more surely to accomplish these ends, his design was to massacre the two Tzars, the Princesses, with the exception of Sophia, and all those of the nobility who were attached to the court. This horrible plot being discovered, all the royal family again fled to the Troitski Monastery, which was at the same time a fortress and a place of sanctity. From this place Sophia pretended to negociate with Couvanski, and managed matters so well as to decoy him within the lines; when he was seized and instantly beheaded, with the whole of his officers who accompanied him. Some say the plot was laid for seizing him by Galitzin, and that he was way-laid by 200 horsemen in the road to

the Troitski Monastery. This is not improbable, as the Princess had taken Prince Basil Galitzin as her first councillor in all affairs of state. The regiments of the Strelitzes, being apprised of the fate of their leader, again flew to arms; but on the Boyars assembling their vassals, and the other troops of the empire being put in march for the Convent, about four thousand of these turbulent men laid down their arms, and received a pardon from the triumvirate. Gordon, who was present, states that the young Tzar Peter with great difficulty was prevailed on to assent to the executions that took place, until the patriarch had succeeded in persuading him of the necessity; and by his account, this rebellion was not accompanied by those barbarities which various writers have ascribed to it *.

All this happened in 1685, when Peter was but thirteen years of age. As to his education, in such troublesome times, and associated with such persons, it is not likely to have been of the best description. His father, on his death-bed, when Peter was scarcely five years of age, appointed as his governor a general officer called Menesius, a native of Scotland; probably Menzies, that name

* General Patrick Gordon, here mentioned, must not be confounded with General Alexander Gordon, who has published a Life of Peter the Great. The former kept a very voluminous diary, which has never yet been published. It is mentioned by Coxe as being shut up in the Archives of Moscow; but it *was* in England not long ago, and probably *will be* again. It commences with January, 1684, and continues to 1698. He was a great friend and adviser of the Tzar Alexis, and also of young Peter, who sat by his death-bed and closed his eyes.

being generally pronounced *Meenies*. He is represented as a person well qualified for that situation, being thoroughly acquainted with all the affairs of Europe, and speaking most of the European languages; but when the princess Sophia conspired against her infant brother, finding she was unable to prevail on Menesius to abandon the interests of Peter, she compelled him to give up the trust which her father had reposed in him.

It is rather remarkable that so little is known of the history of this gentleman. In the reign of Alexis, in the year 1672, Menesius was sent by that Tzar, as ambassador to Rome, to negociate for the re-union of the Greek and Romish churches, but on conditions that were deemed inadmissible. The Pope indeed refused to acknowledge the title of Tzar, as having too near an affinity to that of Cæsar; his Holiness being ignorant, it would seem, that it is a borrowed title from that held by the petty princes of the east, descended from the house of Gengis-Khan.

It does not appear that any governor was appointed to succeed Menesius, nor is any account given of the plan of Peter's education; but it is more than probable that the general belief, of its being entirely and purposely neglected, is true, and that he was mainly indebted to the strength of his own natural genius for those transcendent abilities which he displayed in after-life. His sister Sophia is accused of having placed about him a set of debauched young men, who led him into every kind of excess, by which she hoped to destroy his health and impair his intellect, but it is difficult to give credit to such baseness. In point

of fact it could not be so, as Peter was placed under the immediate guardianship of his mother; and Sophia contented herself by undertaking the education of John, for which she was well qualified, being an accomplished and elegant scholar. Scheltema observes that the masters and teachers of the young prince remain unknown, but that a countryman of his, of the name of Francis Timmerman, was his first instructor in arithmetic, mathematics, and fortification. It is also said that several other Dutchmen, among whom was Andreas Winius, and the Dane, Ysbrands Ides, were in the service of the two Tzars, and held in great esteem at court, both of whom were very capable of giving instruction to young Peter *.

After Moscow and the state had once more regained their usual tranquillity, Sophia continued to possess and to exercise the chief authority, Peter being yet too young, or too diffident, to take any active share, and John utterly incapable of acting. She thought it necessary, however, to share her power with Prince Basil Galitzin, a man of superior education and first-rate abilities, of an active, enterprising spirit, and indefatigable application. His first step was to distribute the mutinous Strelitzes among the regiments in the distant provinces of the empire. His attention was next drawn towards the Crimea, the khan of which had insolently demanded of Russia an annual tribute of sixty thousand roubles, in imitation of that which the Turk had imposed on Poland. Galitzin and Sophia

* Rusland en de Nederlanden beschouwd, &c., door Jacobus Scheltema.

were determined to wipe off the insult of such a proposal. For this purpose they ordered preparations to be made for a vigorous war against the Tartars of the Crimea, to which they were further urged by the Poles, who had surrendered to Russia the duchy of Smolensko, the Ukraine, and some other territories, (which she had, in fact, conquered from them,) on the condition of her opposing the incursions of these people into Poland.

Galitzin reluctantly undertook the command of this expedition; and when all was ready, he marched in 1687, with a considerable army, which was further augmented by the junction of a body of Cossacks, towards the Crimea. His troops were for the most part undisciplined, badly armed, and worse clothed, and but little inured to the hardships of a campaign. Having failed to reach Perecop, on account of the great plains being burnt up, and no water to be had, he returned to the river Samara, which falls into the Volga in about the 53rd degree of latitude, where he employed his men in building a town of wooden houses, and erecting and storing magazines for the next campaign. Galitzin laid the blame of his failure on his ally, the Cossack chief, whom, with his son, the council banished into Siberia, where they perished in great misery.

In 1689 it was determined to send another and more considerable army against the Crimea, and Galitzin was again appointed to the command. The hetman, or chief of the Cossacks, who had succeeded the unfortunate man, was Mazeppa, the very man whom Lord Byron has immortalised in verse, and Astley caricatured on the stage.

Galitzin again failed of making any impression on the Tartars, or in compelling them to forego their demand of tribute. The result of these unsuccessful campaigns tended, among other things, to the ruin of the favourite minister.

During his absence, the party opposed to him and to Sophia had brought about the marriage of the Tzar Peter, then about seventeen, to a young lady named Ottokesa Federowna Lapouchin, daughter of the boyar Feodor Abrahamavitz. This step, taken without consulting the Princess Sophia, was highly resented by her, but approved by all the first families in Moscow. Galitzin, on his return, found all his plans destroyed by this marriage, and all his hopes utterly blasted, on its being announced that the new Tzarina was pregnant. Voltaire states, on the authority of Neuville, the Polish envoy, who resided at Moscow, and was eye-witness to what passed, that Sophia and Galitzin engaged the new chief of the Strelitzes to sacrifice the young Tzar to their ambition; that at least six hundred of these soldiers were ordered to seize on the person of the prince; and he adds, "the secret memoirs with which I have been entrusted by the court of Russia, affirm that a scheme had been laid to murder Peter the First." The Tzar was once more obliged to save himself in the Convent of the Trinity, where he assembled th eboyars of his party, and a large body of soldiers, and all that he knew to be attached to his person. The accomplices were all seized and punished with great severity by the knout or the *battogues*, and then beheaded. Tekilavetof, the chief of the Strelitzes, was put to the torture, con-

fessed the whole, and was then beheaded. Prince Galitzin escaped with life by the intercession of a namesake and relation, who was a favourite of Peter, but his immense estate was forfeited, and he was banished to the neighbourhood of Archangel. His sentence, according to Neuville, was expressed in the following terms, which agrees with what is stated by Nestesuranoi* :—"Thou art commanded by the most merciful Tzar to retire to Karga, a town under the pole, and there to pass the remainder of thy days. His Majesty, out of his excessive benevolence, allows thee for subsistence three copecks per day. His justice ordains that all thy property be confiscated to the treasury." On this Voltaire observes, "There is no town under the pole, and the person who dictated this sentence must have been a very bad geographer; but," he adds, "it is said Neuville was imposed upon by a false account†." Galitzin survived his fall twenty-four years; he was recalled from banishment in 1711, and died on his own estate two years after his liberation. The princess Sophia was confined to a convent in Moscow, where she remained till her death, which happened in the year 1704, fifteen years afterwards. Peter was now the real and only sovereign, for his brother John had no other share of the government than that of lending his name to the public acts. His short life was spent in retirement, and he died in 1696.

* Mém. du Règne de Pierre le Grand.

† This is hypercriticism; but Neuville, in fact, is generally very little deserving of credit. He was one of those diplomatic characters who endeavour to pick up all the gossip they can to fill a despatch for their employers, at their respective courts.

CHAPTER II.

The Tzar creates a Navy, and new-models his Army—Le Fort—Menzikoff—Gordon—First Attack on Asoph fails—The second succeeds—Conspiracy discovered and defeated.

Hitherto the young Tzar Peter had taken no prominent part in any of these turbulent proceedings. It would appear that he advisedly kept himself aloof, in the midst of the commotions that distracted the capital and its neighbourhood. It is probable enough that, possessing only a divided authority, and considering his youth, it might have been deemed prudent by his friends and advisers to prevent any interference, on his part, with one party or the other. It is not likely, however, that a young man of his active and restless disposition should have spent his time in idleness, between the Kremlin and the Trinity Convent, or that he was unobservant of what was passing around him. Neither do there appear to be any grounds for the accusation, which has been preferred against the party of Sophia, that either she or they were base enough to encourage an inclination, which he is said to have early discovered, for indulging in brandy and other strong liquors, or that they had contrived to put upon him companions, well suited to train him up in every species of intemperance and debauchery *. Voltaire, who copies Nestesu-

* Mémoires du Règne de Pierre le Grand.

ranoi, says, "His education was far from being worthy of his genius; it had been spoiled chiefly by the Princess Sophia, whose interest it was to leave him in ignorance, and to indulge him in those excesses, which in persons of his rank, age, and circumstances, it had been but too much the custom to overlook. From his feasting and conversing with foreigners, who had been invited to Moscow by Prince Galitzin, no one could have suspected that he was to be one day the reformer of his country*." There is, however, every reason to believe that the statement of his time being spent in idleness and debauchery is much exaggerated, but that a considerable portion of it must have been dedicated to the acquirement of the mechanical arts and handicraft works; and this is the more probable, as, on his arrival at Zaandam †, in Holland, it was observed that he was not unacquainted with the use of the adze, the plane, and the lathe.

Be this as it may, the moment he became invested with sole and supreme authority,—for his brother John never interfered,—his genius shone forth with a lustre that dazzled all eyes, and the development of the vigorous powers of his mind was a subject of universal wonder and admiration. He was now in his eighteenth year, tall, stout, well-made, and handsome; the features of his countenance regular, but indicating, when displeased or thoughtful, a degree of severity that was far from agreeable; but when his passions were not excited he was lively, cheerful and sociable.

* History of the Russian Empire under Peter the Great.

† Generally, but improperly, written Saardam.

Full of energy and activity, he found nothing too arduous for his conception; and as a proof that his youth had not been wasted in thoughtlessness, he commenced at once the vast project, which he must have previously revolved in his mind, of changing the whole system of the government, and of reforming the manners of his people. The first object to which he directed his attention, as being the most important, was the reformation of the army, and of the establishments for conducting military affairs. He next instituted an inquiry into the state of the civil government and the principles on which it was administered. To assist him in his various plans, he encouraged the introduction of Germans into the empire, some of whom had already established themselves in Moscow, where they exercised their various trades and manufactures; and the Dutch, who were in considerable numbers, were held in especial favour, particularly for their skill in ship-building and navigation.

It is remarked by most of Peter's biographers, that from his infancy he had such a dread of water as amounted absolutely to hydrophobia; that he could not pass a brook without being thrown into a cold sweat and convulsions. The cause of this dread of water is ascribed to his being one day, when about four or five years old, lying asleep on his mother's lap in a carriage, and suddenly awakened by the approach to a waterfall or cataract, the rushing noise of which had such an effect on his nerves as to bring on a fever. It is not uncommon to invent, or exaggerate, juvenile accidents in order to account for personal defects or eccentricities, which are, for the most part, hereditary or constitutional. If, however, he had this aversion,

he determined to conquer it; and, by practising in a small boat on the river which passes through Moscow, he not only succeeded, but became so passionately fond of the water, and took such delight in managing this little boat, that it may be said, and in fact he himself considered it to have been, the germ of the Russian navy. It had been built in the reign of Peter's father, by a Dutchman of the name of Brandt, whom that sovereign had invited into Russia. Peter having accidentally seen this small bark, and noticed it to be different from the flat pontoons he had been accustomed to look at, inquired of Timmerman, who taught him fortification, "Why it was made so unlike other vessels?" the reply was, that it was constructed to sail against the wind. There was something new in this, and therefore sufficient to excite his curiosity; Brandt was immediately summoned, and having, at Peter's desire, masted, rigged, and repaired her, showed him how to sail her on the Yausa, to the surprise and delight of the young Tzar, who from that time undertook, and very soon succeeded in the management of the vessel himself.

Brandt was now engaged to build for him a sort of small yacht, and when finished, a Dutch seaman was procured to assist him in navigating her. By degrees he learned to manage this little vessel as skilfully as his master; and became so delighted with sailing, and no doubt so well satisfied of its importance, that he engaged the Hollanders to build him no less than five vessels at Plescow, or, as the charts have it, Pscow on the great lake Peipus *.

As soon as these vessels were ready and manned,

* Scheltema, Rusland en de Nederlanden.

Peter took with him his friend General Patrick Gordon, who embarked with him, and kept a log of their proceedings. But the limits of a lake, though sixty leagues in circumference, were too confined for the rising ambition of the Tzar, who now resolved to see what a ship could do on the wide ocean; and for this purpose he set out for Archangel, where he purchased a trading vessel from a Dutch merchant there, to which he gave the name of *Peter*. Having engaged a crew from the trading vessels at that port, he, accompanied by a Dutch ship of war and some Dutch and English merchantmen, proceeded as far as Ponoi on the coast of Lapland, about 150 miles from Archangel; and thus, for the first time, says the Dutch author, "the Frozen Ocean had the honour of bearing a monarch on its bosom." His taste for navigation had now grown into a kind of passion; and he carried it so far, as often to expose himself to imminent danger. His confidence in his knowledge as a navigator and pilot rendered him intrepid in the highest degree. When overtaken by a storm and the sea broke over his vessel, he was so far from feeling anything like fear, that he used to encourage his frightened crew with words like these, "Never fear, the Tzar Peter cannot be drowned: did you ever hear of a Russian Tzar having perished on the water?" Like Cæsar, he trusted to his fortunes.—I always am the Tzar. And might say with that great commander:—

> "Danger knows full well,
> That *Peter* is more dangerous than he:
> We were two lions littered in one day,
> And I the elder and more terrible."

Peter, some time after this, visited Archangel

again, and remained from three to four months, in the course of which he contracted an intimacy with a Dutch skipper of the name of Musch, a native of Zaandam, and frequently went to sea in his vessel. One day he told Musch that, as he had regularly advanced in his new army from a drummer to his present rank, which was yet only that of a subaltern, he was likewise desirous of going through all the steps that were considered necessary to make a perfect seaman. Musch thought the Tzar was in jest, but his Majesty soon convinced him to the contrary by saying, that he would go to sea with him the next day, and dedicate that day to his passing through all the gradations of a seaman's servitude, and actually performing the duties of each. He first served as a *zwabber*, or common drudge, who swept the cabin and swabbed the decks ; this done, he was appointed *knecht*, or servant, whose duty was to light and keep up the fire in a little stove, to prime the skipper's pipe, brush his jacket, &c. ; he then became *kajuitwachter*, or cabin-boy, whose duty was to wait at table, serve out brandy or gin, and to make grog. He was now prepared to commence seamanship, and the next step of advancement was to the situation of *yong matroos*, or young sailor, and by orders of his captain to go aloft, hand or loose the sails, &c. Here Musch began to be greatly alarmed, on seeing Peter run up the shrouds to the masthead, lest he should fall down and break his neck. All this may appear trifling, but Peter had an object in it. He had resolved that, both in the sea and land service, the officers should commence with the very lowest rank, and that his own example should prevent

all murmuring. The skipper Musch died shortly after this, and Peter sent a gratuity to his widow at Zaandam of five hundred guilders. Another amiable trait in his character while at Archangel deserves to be recorded. Overtaken one day, when out at sea, in a storm, Peter, more than usually anxious, was instructing the helmsman how to steer, and having, at the same time, taken hold of the tiller, "Stand out of my way," called out the impatient seaman; "I must know better than you how to steer the vessel." Having brought her through a dangerous passage among the rocks to a safe anchorage, the poor fellow, recollecting what had passed, fell at the feet of the Tzar and prayed forgiveness for his rudeness. Peter took him up, and, as usual when pleased, kissed his forehead—"There is nothing to forgive," said he; "I owe you my thanks, not alone for our rescue from danger, but also for the proper rebuke you gave me." He then made him a present of his drenched clothes, and settled on him a small pension *.

This passion for sailing continued through life, but he indulged it as well through policy as inclination; having, at a very early period of his reign, seen the expediency, and indeed the necessity, of establishing a fleet on the Volga, to keep the Turks and Tartars in awe; and another on the lake Ladoga and the gulf of Finland to protect his territories against his powerful neighbours the Swedes. Having one day, at a much later period of his life, invited all the foreign ministers to

* Scheltema, on the authority of Van Halem.

accompany him in his yacht on a water party to Cronstadt, to see his fleet, then ready for sea, a sudden thunder-storm arose: the sea got up, and the waves, dashing furiously against the little vessel, threatened her with momentary destruction. The ministers were dreadfully alarmed, while Peter and his crew appeared to be wholly unconcerned. They entreated him to put back to Petersburg, or to land them, if possible, at Peterhoff; but, attentive to the steering of the vessel, he calmly said, "Don't be alarmed, gentlemen," and continued to direct the helmsman and to work the ship. At length, one of the ministers approached him, with a grave and fearful countenance:—"I beseech your Majesty," said he, "for the love of God, to return to Petersburg, or to Peterhoff, which is still nearer, and not to forget that my Court did not send me to Russia to be drowned: if I should perish here, as in all likelihood I shall, your Majesty will have to answer to the King my master." On hearing this, the Tzar could not help smiling, notwithstanding the vessel was in some danger. "Sir," said he, "if you are drowned, we shall all share the same fate, and nobody will be left to answer for your Excellency *."

But the army, as we have said, was the first great object of his attention. In his childhood he was particularly delighted with beating the drum, and "playing at soldiers;" and the taste for a military life, as he advanced in years, is supposed to have accompanied him to his obscure retirement

* Stœhlin. Authority Mr. Bruyns, Master Attendant-General.

in the Trinity convent. In his first attempt to form a body of disciplined troops, he was ably assisted by a foreigner, for whom he had conceived the strongest attachment, and who never left him till he was taken away by death. To this excellent man Russia may truly be said to stand indebted for the able advice and assistance he gave to Peter, in laying the solid foundation of that true grandeur and prosperity, to which, in later times, she has advanced. This remarkable man, Mr. Francis Le Fort, the son of a respectable merchant of Geneva, had imbibed from his childhood a strong inclination for the army: but, at the particular request of his father, consented to be placed, at an early period of his life, in the counting-house of Mr. Franconis, an eminent merchant in Amsterdam*. According to Voltaire, who gives as his authority "General Le Fort's manuscripts," he quitted his father's house at the age of fourteen, and was four years a cadet in the citadel of Marseilles: whence he went to Holland, and, serving as a volunteer, was wounded at the siege of Grave upon the Meuse. The historian adds, that, in expectation of further preferment, he embarked in 1675, in company with a German colonel of the name of Verstin, who had obtained a commission from Peter's father, the Tzar Alexis, to raise a few troops in the Netherlands, and to transport them to Archangel; that on their arrival, after a perilous voyage, the Tzar Alexis was no more; the government had undergone a change: and Muscovy was in an unsettled state; that the

* John Mottley's History of the Life of Peter I.

governor of Archangel suffered them all, for a long time, to languish with want, and even threatened to send them to the extremity of Siberia; that then, each shifting for himself, Le Fort, in great necessity, made his way to Moscow, where he offered his services to M. de Hoorn, the Danish resident, who made him his secretary. This was in 1690, when Peter was eighteen years of age *.

The resident was one of those foreigners whom the Tzar honoured by dining at his table, and there he first took notice of Le Fort. He inquired after his character from M. de Hoorn, and finding that he was a young man of great ability, of modest demeanour, and had made himself acquainted with the Russian language, he asked the resident if he would be willing to part with him. The resident replied that the exchange was too flattering and advantageous to Le Fort, and that he had too much regard for his welfare, and too high a respect for the commands of his majesty, not to consent to it.

The cheerful, yet modest and unassuming, manners of Le Fort, the fund of information he possessed respecting the customs and manners of the European courts, at which he had resided, but, above all, the general knowledge he possessed of military affairs, so delighted the Tzar, that he soon became his constant companion and favourite, and was always sent for to accompany him wherever he went. The first mark of his favour was to bestow on him a commission as captain of infantry. It has been said that Le Fort had no great proficiency

* Voltaire's History of the Russian Empire under Peter the Great.

in the military service, neither was he a man of literature, nor much conversant in the abstract sciences, but that he had seen a great deal, and was capable of forming a right judgment of what he did see *. Such a man, indebted, as the Tzar himself was, to his own genius for the knowledge he had acquired, was perhaps better suited to be the companion and adviser of Peter, than one more deeply skilled in the arts and sciences, but less agreeable in his manners.

Peter had great reason, from past experience, to place no confidence in those of his generals who were chosen from among the corps of Strelitzes: and had determined to replace them by regular and well-disciplined officers, such as Le Fort had told him were to be found in the armies of Europe, and especially at the courts of Austria and Denmark. With this view, he one day sounded Le Fort as to his opinion with regard to his present guards, and desired he would give it freely. In reply, he said he thought the same of them as of the rest of his soldiers—that they were a fine body of well-made men, who required only to be well officered, disciplined, and properly accoutred, to make them excellent soldiers; but that, in the first place, their long coats must be laid aside, being unbecoming, inconvenient, and troublesome; that their beards must be shaved; their hair properly dressed; and concluded his observations by proposing, that he would make a trial of the changes he should recommend, on a small scale. Peter resolved on this, as he did on most occasions, at once. He

* Voltaire—in which General Gordon pretty nearly agrees.

immediately took Le Fort to his country residence of Preobrazinski, where a company of fifty men were selected from among the sons of the neighbouring boyars, and the younger part of the domestics, whom he clothed and accoutred *en militaire;* and having chosen a few of the youths, sons of the boyars, to be the officers, the work of training the little corps according to the European tactics of the day immediately began. It is unlikely that the Tzar should not have taken an active part in the training; and the story is not very probable that Le Fort took the whole on himself, without consulting the Tzar. When all was ready, Peter, however, was highly pleased with their appearance and manœuvres, and desired that he might be instantly enrolled in the company as a private soldier. He directed also that the young boyars, following his example, should all become privates, and serve in succession in that capacity, rising gradually to the rank of corporal, serjeant, ensign, before they obtained a commission as lieutenant. Such is stated to have been the origin of that celebrated regiment, known afterwards by the name of the Preobrazinski guards.

The Tzar was thus enabled, from this small beginning, to raise, in a very short space of time, a corps of five thousand disciplined troops in whom he could confide; trained, mostly, by General Patrick Gordon, and composed, for the most part, of foreigners. Le Fort himself undertook to raise another corps of twelve thousand men, from foreigners, natives, and chiefly from the Strelitzes, which he accomplished; and for which the Tzar created him their general. Voltaire says, on the authority of Le Fort's manuscripts, that one-third

of this army, which was called only a *regiment*, consisted of French refugees: and this, he observes, confounds the impertinence of those who pretend that France lost very few inhabitants by the revocation of the edict of Nantes *. Peter would not suffer this newly raised army to remain inactive in time of peace, and thus relax in its discipline. He caused them to be frequently exercised in mock sieges and sham engagements; and, it is said, such was their ardour and desire of distinction, that they sometimes fought a real battle, when a sham fight only was intended, in which several of the men were killed and wounded; and that in one of these Le Fort received a considerable wound †.

In the midst of these military sports, if they may be so called, the Tzar was not unmindful of his navy. His Dutch and Venetian shipbuilders were employed in building gun-boats and sloops of war, at the mouth of a small deep river near Voronitz, which discharges its waters into the Don or Tanais. These vessels were to be held in readiness to drop down before Asoph, which he was resolved to attack, and, if possible, to secure as a most important post in the event of a war, which he foresaw would speedily happen, with the Tartars of the Crimea. He visited frequently the progress of their equipment, and, on one occasion, raised Le Fort to the rank of Admiral, in addition to that of general. The advantages to be derived from encouraging foreigners, of all descriptions, to flock into the country, were felt and

* Voltaire, Histoire, &c.
† Nestesuranoi, Mottley, &c.

acknowledged by the sensible portion of the community, but the strangers were regarded with something more than jealousy by the priests and many of the boyars, who considered all innovation as subversive of their ancient constitution, which of course was, in their estimation, the best of all possible constitutions.

An army and a navy, however, were not to be formed and kept up without money; and Peter's finances were in a state of as great disorder as his troops had been. He was, therefore, honestly apprised by Le Fort, that his revenues were not in a condition to bear the expenses of what he was designing, with regard to the building and equipment of a navy, and the feeding, clothing, and payment of his army, to say nothing of the pay that was due to the numerous foreign artisans and workmen that were employed about the court, and on the great works that were projected or actually in progress; but, at the same time, assured him that his revenues were improvable. He pointed out to him, in the first place, the impolicy of exacting such heavy duties on all kinds of merchandise that were imported into Russia, and the equally heavy imposts that were exacted on the export of its own produce; that, in consequence of these charges the merchants were compelled to conspire together how to avoid them, by introducing and sending away articles of commerce in a clandestine manner, either by craft or by bribing the custom-house officers; and that, by such means, the revenue was defrauded to a great extent. Convinced of the truth of this representation, he immediately ordered the duties to be lowered from ten to five per cent., and ordained

severe penalties on such as should be detected in committing frauds; the consequence of which was that, in the very first year of the new regulations, the revenue of the customs was augmented nearly by two millions of roubles.

Nor did the benefits bestowed on Russia by Le Fort rest here. The greatest and most important of all others was that conferred personally on the Tzar himself. The influence which he had gained over him was employed in softening the asperity of his temper, and curbing the violence of his passions, to which he was frequently subject. Many a blow was turned aside, and many a life saved, by his timely interference. When a boyar or noble, for they more than others were liable to the knout, or to lose their heads, was ordered for punishment, as often happened on very trifling occasions, Le Fort would interpose, and desire him to suspend his judgment till he became cool; and not succeeding, as was sometimes the case, he would entreat him to deal the blow upon himself rather than on the innocent subject of his wrath; and this generally produced a suspension of his anger, and saved the intended victim. By such generosity Le Fort became an universal favourite among all classes of Russians, who seemed to forget he was a foreigner, and were willing to consider him as one of their own countrymen.

Another piece of service, rendered to the Tzar Peter by M. Le Fort, was the casual introduction of a very remarkable personage, who, from one of the lowest stations in life, became the leading character in all the affairs of state;—a general, a governor, and ultimately raised to the princely dignity. This was no other than prince Alexan-

der Menzikoff. It is said by M. de la Motraye, that his parents were in so miserable a condition, in one of the villages on the banks of the Volga, that they could not afford to give to their son the common education of reading and writing; that he left them at the age of thirteen or fourteen, without saying a word, to seek service in Moscow, where he was taken into that of a pastry-cook. The daily business of this young lad was to traverse the streets of Moscow, with a little basket of cakes and patties to sell; and, having a clear and sweet voice, he was in the habit of offering his patties in a song or tune of his own composing; and being well made, neatly clad, and of a prepossessing face, crowds generally gathered round him, and his basket was soon emptied. It happened one day that this boy caught the attention of General Le Fort *, who called him into the house and asked him if he would sell his pies and his basket? The boy replied that it was his business to sell his pies, but as to the basket he must ask his master's leave to dispose of that. The general was so struck with his manner and appearance, that he asked if he should like to enter his service. In short, he took him into his house, and being a fine, handsome, and engaging young man, thought the Tzar would not be displeased to have him in his service, in which he was not mistaken. He saw him, heard his history, and took him as his page. He soon became a great favourite, and accompanied the Tzar in all his travels; he employed him on all his secret com-

* Mémoires, &c., par Le B. Iwan Nestesuranoi. M. Voltaire says it was the Tzar who called him.

missions and confidential business. Never was an instance of so sudden a rise, from the lowest state of poverty, to riches, honours, power, and magnificence, as that of Menzikoff. The subsequent history of this remarkable person is intimately interwoven with that of the Tzar Peter. It was said, indeed, that the Tzar owed his life to Menzikoff when a cake-boy, and that this was the cause of his sudden elevation. Peter, indeed, said on one occasion, when pleading for his favourite under a criminal prosecution, that he owed his life to him. The story is not likely to have happened, but the narrator was employed in both the court and the army, and it was probably the gossip of the day. Peter, according to this story, is said to have dined one day with a boyar of the discontented faction, who had determined to get rid of him by poison; that Menzikoff, being in the kitchen, observed some white powder put into a particular dish; that the Tzar was apprised of it, pressed the boyar to eat of it, who declined, saying it did not become the servant to eat with his master; that the plate was set down to a dog, which, having devoured it, died in convulsions; that the boyar was taken into custody, but was found dead in his bed, —and thus the matter dropped *.

It would appear that Peter was far from being at ease in his domestic circle. The marriages of Sovereigns, seldom made by the choice of either party, but from political expediency, can hardly be expected to turn out happy. Peter had a wife forced upon him at the age of seventeen; before

* Memoirs of Capt. Bruce.

he attained that of twenty, he found cause to put her away and confine her strictly to a convent. This proceeding has been accounted for in various ways. Some pretend she was disloyal to his bed —others that she had reproached Menzikoff for taking her husband to visit low women, who had formerly been his customers for cakes, and that it was he who advised the Tzar to divorce her. The real cause, however, is generally supposed to have been the encouragement she gave to the powerful party that was hostile to every innovation, which he either had introduced, or was intending to introduce, into the affairs of the nation; for the fact was well known that the greatest opposition he met with, in his grand design of regenerating his country, and out of savages forming men, came from his wife and her connexions. She was taught by her confessor to regard all innovations as so many sacrileges, and every foreigner as a corrupter of her husband. Such conduct encouraged the factious boyars, and the priests, to use all endeavours to thwart his designs for the improvement and prosperity of the country. His son, Alexis, being an infant, was placed under the guardianship of his repudiated mother, which turned out to be the principal cause of all his misfortunes.

The way in which General Alexander Gordon got his first commission in the Russian service, just at this time, was entirely owing to his illiberal hatred of foreigners, and is highly creditable to the discernment and firmness of the Tzar. Being introduced to Peter, on his arrival, in Moscow, by his namesake Patrick Gordon, and also to

many of the first families, he received an invitation to a wedding. Several young Russians were present; and, when the bottle had freely circulated, they began to speak very disrespectfully of foreigners in general, and of the Scots in particular; and this kind of conversation went on so long, and was so pointed, that Gordon became irritated, and laid the one next him sprawling on the floor by a blow with his fist. Five others immediately set upon him; but the use he made of his large brawny arms drove them off, and he remained master of the field. An event of this kind was sure to be carried to the Tzar, especially as the youths were of the first families. Gordon was ordered the next day to appear before him, and expected nothing less than the knout or to be sent to Siberia; but the modest manner in which he stated the case to the Tzar, and the sorrow he expressed for having unintentionally given him displeasure, gained at once the good opinion of Peter, who, always acting on the impulse of the moment, said, 'Well, Sir, your accusers have done you justice by admitting that you beat six of them,—I will also do you justice.' On saying this he withdrew, and in a few minutes returned with a Major's commission, which he presented to Gordon with his own hand. Peter knew that he had received a captain's commission from Louis XIV. after serving in the wars in Catalonia. Gordon's biographer adds, 'This anecdote of our author's history he once told, and we believe never but once *.'

* Life of Major-General Gordon, prefixed to his History of Peter the Great.

The appointment of Le Fort to the rank of admiral was no empty title; he was despatched to hasten the ships building at Voronitz, and prepare them with all expedition to drop down the Don preparatory to an attack on Azoph, which the Tzar was determined to get possession of, as the key to the sovereignty of the Black Sea. General Patrick Gordon received directions to march at the head of five thousand men along the line of the Don; Le Fort was to follow with the twelve thousand men which he had raised; a corps of Strelitzes was placed under the command of Generals Scherematof and Shein; and to all these was joined a body of Cossacks. The Tzar was determined to proceed to the attack in person, but in the capacity only of a volunteer. Azoph was a strong place and well garrisoned, and could only be successfully bombarded from the water; but it unfortunately happened that, with every exertion, some Venetian galleys and two large Dutch frigates were not able to get down the river in time. The Russians, impatient, would not wait their arrival; they laid siege to the place and miscarried, chiefly, as was reported, through the treachery of an inferior officer in the Tzar's army.

The name of this man was Jacob, a native of Dantzic, and an artillery officer under General Shein. The general for some fault or other had bambooed Jacob, who, not bearing this disgraceful punishment so composedly as a Russian would have done, determined on revenge. During the night he spiked the cannon of the invaders, deserted to the enemy, and the same man, who had directed the approaches to the fortress, was now the best

defender of it. The Russians made an attempt to storm, but, after losing a great number of men, were repulsed and obliged to raise the siege. Thus ended the first campaign of the Tzar Peter.

Though completely beaten, the Tzar showed himself a man not to be disheartened by one stroke of adverse fortune. He resolved, on the spot, to make a second attempt; and accordingly, in the early part of the spring of 1696, he put his forces in motion, and with increased means proceeded to the attack of the town. His fleet was now completely equipped and properly commanded. The siege was conducted with systematic regularity, and the Tzar was constantly in the trenches or on board some of the ships of the squadron; but he soon began to grow impatient at the protracted siege, called a council of war, and requested the opinions of the several officers. All of these advised to delay,—until it came to the turn of the old General Patrick Gordon, who recommended a most extraordinary plan, such as one might expect to find practised in the days of Homer. He said that, in his opinion, the safest and most expeditious way to become masters of the place would be, to carry on before them a whole rampart of earth along the front of the town, which, as they advanced, would hourly increase. 'By having ten or twelve thousand men night and day, we shall,' said he, 'roll as much earth before us, as will not only be sufficient to fill up the fosse, but will have more, over and above, than will exceed the height of the town walls, by which means, in a few weeks, we shall oblige the enemy to surrender, or we shall bury them alive.' The Tzar

preferred this opinion, and ordered them to do as he had proposed. So to work they went, and with such cheerfulness, that, within the space of five weeks, the fosse was actually full, and the earth above the height of the ramparts, rolling in over them, which obliged the governor to put out the white flag. The younger Gordon, who was present, adds, that twelve thousand men were constantly at work, who threw the earth from hand to hand, like so many steps of a stair *.

After this extraordinary operation of taking a fortified town, Peter granted to the governor a capitulation, and had the satisfaction to witness the surrender of the garrison, on the 28th of July; and that which gave him more pleasure than anything besides, was to find that the traitor Jacob was still there, and that the governor made no difficulty in delivering him up to the besiegers among the rest of the prisoners.

The Russians had no sooner got possession of the town, than Peter issued his orders for improving and strengthening the fortifications, enlarging the harbour, and for increasing his fleet, both in number and size; some of the ships, ordered to be built, being intended to carry from thirty to sixty pieces of cannon. On his return to Moscow, a contribution was directed to be levied on the boyars, or land proprietors, in aid of the expense of building and fitting out this fleet; and, conceiving that the estates of the clergy ought to bear their proportion, in the service of the common cause, orders were sent forth that the patriarch, the

* Gordon's History of Peter the Great.

bishops, and the superior clergy, should contribute to the fitting out of an intended expedition, in which the honour and the glory of their country were concerned, and which was for the general good of Christendom *. This powerful armament was intended to give to Russia the command of the Palus Mœotis, as the best and most practicable means of driving the Tartars out of the Crimea; and also of opening a free communication with Circassia and Georgia by the Couban, and through these countries to establish a commercial intercourse with Persia. Such were the grand designs which the Tzar revolved in his mind on the fall of Azoph, and which, in later times, have been fully accomplished.

In order to impress the people of the capital, the boyars, and the clergy, with the great importance of the victory gained by the army and navy of his own creating, and to give encouragement to his troops to engage heartily in daring enterprises of a similar kind, he caused the officers of both services to enter the ancient capital under triumphal arches, amidst the firing of cannon and the ringing of bells; and feasts and entertainments, fireworks, illuminations, and every demonstration of joy continued for several days. Admiral Le Fort, the generals, and all the officers of the army and navy, marched in procession, and took precedency of the Tzar Peter, who disdained all rank, being desirous of convincing his subjects that the only road to military preferment was by meritorious conduct. On this occasion the triumphal entry

* Voltaire's History of the Russian Empire.

was followed by the captives taken at Azoph ; and Jacob the traitor was placed in a cart, with an executioner on each side and a gallows above his head, on which he was afterwards suspended, having first been broken on the wheel. He had a label on his breast, purporting that 'this wretch had five times changed his religion, and was a traitor to God and man ; that at first he was a Roman Catholic, then a Protestant, afterwards a Greek, and, lastly, a Mahomedan.'

The laurels which had thus crowned his newly-formed army, the honours that were conferred on foreigners serving as officers in that army, and the contributions about to be levied for the support of his land and sea forces, together with the many changes which the Tzar was making in their ancient usages, gave great offence to the adverse party, and particularly to the officers of the Strelitzes, who foresaw that his measures tended to a speedy dissolution of that corps. Instigated by this reflection, a certain number of these misguided men entered into a conspiracy to put the Tzar to death. The plan was to set fire to a building in the Kremlin, at midnight, and as it was quite certain that Peter would be instantly on the spot, one of them was to stab him privately, when in the midst of the crowd. They met together at one of their houses on the night fixed on to carry this diabolical plot into execution ; but two of the conspirators, either from fears of detection and failure, or from feelings of compunction, went to the Tzar and laid open the whole plot. He was at that time at the house of Admiral Le Fort. With a few followers he proceeded to the house

where the conspirators were assembled, and took them all into custody. This happened on the 2nd of February, 1697, and, on the 5th of March, they were executed in the grand square before the Kremlin, and their heads fixed on spikes of iron, as, not very many years ago, those of traitors were fixed on Temple Bar, with this difference, that the spikes for the heads of the Strelitzes were driven into a lofty column, erected for the purpose on the spot; their arms and legs bound round the column, and their trunks thrown on the ground for the dogs to devour. The principal conspirators are said to have been three boyars, a colonel of the Don Cossacks, and four captains of the Strelitzes*.

* Nestesuranoi. Lacombe. John Mottley.

CHAPTER III.

The Tzar Peter travels into Holland—His Residence at Zaandam.

THE conquest of Azoph being accomplished, chiefly by the odd plan of attack proposed by General Patrick Gordon, and the assistance rendered by the ships built by foreigners, and manned chiefly with them, the Tzar was now more than ever convinced of the pre-eminence of the natives of Western Europe over his own barbarous subjects. This consideration created in him a strong desire to give to the latter every facility and encouragement for enlarging their minds, and improving themselves in every species of useful knowledge, and more particularly in the art of war, and the construction of large ships on sound principles of naval architecture. Influenced by these motives, he despatched, in 1697, sixty young Russians, selected by Le Fort out of his regiment, to Venice and Leghorn, in order that they might make themselves acquainted with everything pertaining to the art of ship-building and navigation, and particularly in the construction of row-galleys; and forty more were sent to Holland for the same purpose. A large number were despatched to Germany, to inform themselves in the military discipline and tactics of that nation. Not satisfied with this, he resolved to go himself into Holland, Germany, and Italy,

to procure knowledge from his own observation and experience. He was particularly anxious to make himself perfect in every branch of nautical science, and the several arts connected with it. 'It was a thing,' says Voltaire, 'unparalleled in history, either ancient or modern, for a sovereign, of five-and-twenty years of age, to withdraw from his kingdom, for the sole purpose of learning the art of government.'

The time seemed favourable for such an undertaking. His success before Azoph, the gratification that his army had received by their triumphal entry into Moscow, the amount and improved discipline of that army, the death of his brother John, and the confinement of his sister Sophia, all conspired to assure him of a continuance of the internal tranquillity of his extensive dominions; and though the clergy were clamorous against his sending Russians out of the country, and going himself into foreign, and therefore barbarous, parts, which they said was an abomination before the Lord, and had been so ever since the days of Moses, and therefore contrary to their holy religion; yet as Peter, since his successful campaign and the death of his brother, found himself treated with the most profound respect by the generality of his subjects, he did not much regard the anathemas of the church, or the few discontented boyars, but adhered stedfastly to his resolution; and in the same year, 1697, set out on his travels. He took the precaution, however, of ordering General Gordon, in whom he placed the highest confidence, to remain at the capital with four thousand of his guards until his return, which, as matters turned out.

proved to be the salvation of the government as well as that of the Tzar and the whole of his family*.

As yet Peter was not represented, in his character of Sovereign, at any of the courts of Europe, of the propriety, and, indeed, the necessity of which, he would, no doubt, have been apprised by his friend and mentor General Le Fort. Having therefore determined, as already stated, to visit, in person, the several countries mentioned, he appointed an embassy-extraordinary on a grand scale to proceed, in the first instance, to the States-General of Holland, and to accompany it himself, *incognito*, in the character of a private gentleman, attached to the embassy. The three persons selected as ambassadors were General Le Fort, Alexis Gollowin, Governor of Siberia, and Voristzin, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The retinue consisted of four principal secretaries, twelve noblemen and gentlemen, six pages, a company of fifty of the Preobrazinski guards with their officers, the whole consisting of two hundred persons. The retinue of the Tzar was a valet, a livery servant, and a dwarf, the latter being invariably a part of the royal establishment of Muscovy. It appears also, from documents kept in the dock-yard of Zaandam, that his favourite Menzikoff was one of the twelve attendants.

The ambassadors commenced their journey in April, 1697, proceeding through Esthonia and Livonia. They visited Riga, and the Tzar being desirous of seeing the fortifications of that town, was peremptorily refused by the governor, Count

* Gordon's Hist. of Peter the Great.

D'Alberg. This want of courtesy was not forgotten by Peter in his future war with the Swedes*. At Konigsberg the embassy was received with royal munificence by the King of Prussia. While in Germany there was nothing but feasting and carousing. Mr. Coxe, on anonymous authority, cites the following passage: 'Le Fort is a man of good understanding; very personable, engaging, and entertaining; a true Swiss for probity and bravery, but *chiefly for drinking*. Open tables are kept everywhere, with trumpets and music, attended with feasting and excessive drinking, as if his Tzarish Majesty had been another Bacchus. I have not yet seen such hard drinkers, it is not possible to express it, and they boast of it as a mighty qualification.' The description may be just, but the writer may also be suspected of having mistaken Menzikoff for Le Fort. At one of these bacchanalian debauches, the Tzar took such violent offence at something said by Le Fort, that he instantly drew his sword, and desired him to defend himself. 'Far be it from me,' said Le Fort, 'rather let me perish by the hand of my master.' Peter had raised his sword, but one of the retinue, of the name of Von Prinsen, had presence of mind to catch hold of his arm, and saved, probably, the life of Le Fort. He expressed, says Voltaire, the same concern for this short transport of passion as Alexander showed for the murder of Clytus, for he immediately asked that gentleman's pardon; and with composure observed, that his great desire was to reform his subjects, but

* Voltaire. Nestesuranoi. Journal de Pierre le Grand.

he was ashamed to say he had not yet been able to reform himself*.

Having reached Emmeric on the Rhine, the Tzar impatient to arrive at his destination, left the embassy, and, having hired a small boat, proceeded to Amsterdam, through which, says Nestesuranoi, he fled like lightning, and never once stopped till he arrived at Zaandam, fifteen days before the embassy reached Amsterdam. The first person seen by the Russian party in the boat was a man fishing in a small skiff, of the name of Kist, who had worked as a smith in Russia, and was immediately recognised by one of the six persons who were with the Tzar. This person called over to him to come to them, which he did. The man's astonishment may be conceived on seeing the Tzar of Russia sailing in a little boat, dressed like a Dutch skipper in a red jacket and white linen trousers. Peter told Kist he wanted lodgings, and should like to take them with him. Kist was but in poor circumstances, and would have excused himself, but Peter persisted; and as a poor widow woman had a small house behind his, she assented to move to a little adjoining hut in order to accommodate the royal stranger. Peter's lodgings consisted of two small rooms, with a loft over them, and an adjoining shed †. Kist received strict injunctions on no account whatever to let it be known who his lodger was, as he did not wish to be discovered. To the questions which the crowd, collected to see the strangers, put to them, the Tzar

* Voltaire—referring to MS. Memoirs of Le Fort.

† Scheltema.

replied, (for he could speak the Dutch fluently,) that they were all carpenters and labourers from a foreign country, who had come to Zaandam in search of work. But no one believed this; indeed, the rich clothes of his companions, who had kept on their proper Russian dresses, sufficiently contradicted any such idea.

The first business, after landing, which Peter set about, and which showed a favourable trait in his character, was to inquire after and visit the families and the widows of several Dutch seamen and ship-carpenters, whom he had associated with at Archangel and Plescow, representing himself to each as a brother ship-builder of their relatives. Among others, he paid a visit to the widow of the deceased skipper Musch, to whom he had sent from Archangel a gratuity of five hundred guilders. This poor woman said, 'she was afraid she never could be sufficiently thankful to the Tzar for his great kindness, but entreated him, if he ever might be permitted to come into the presence of his Tzarish Majesty, to tell him how very welcome the gift was in her widowed state, and that she was most humbly and cordially thankful for his kind consideration.' He assured the poor woman she might rely on the Tzar being made acquainted with all she had said *.

Having made all his inquiries after the families of his Dutch friends in Russia, Peter next proceeded to visit the shops of Zaandam, to purchase carpenters' tools for himself and companions, whom he had directed to clothe themselves in the common dress of the dock-yards. Among these,

* Scheltema.

as it afterwards turned out, were his youthful companions and favourites, Menzikoff and Galitzin, who were directed to handle the tools and work at ship-building as well as himself.

The day following their arrival being Sunday, all the workmen of this then busy and populous town, and whole crowds from Amsterdam, hearing of the passage of the strangers to Zaandam, and guessing from the report of those who had seen them, that they were the forerunners of the expected embassy, assembled before the small lodgings of Peter and those of his companions, very much to the annoyance of the former, who had an unconquerable antipathy against a crowd, and more especially of strangers assembled to look at him. Besides, the secret of his real character was, as might be expected, very soon divulged. A Dutch resident at Archangel had written home to his friends, annnouncing the preparations making for the embassy, and the intention of the Tzar to accompany it in disguise, enclosing, at the same time, a description of his person, and a portrait print. Among the crowd, which curiosity had attracted, was a barber from Amsterdam, to whom the letter and print had been shown; and, as it would seem that, from the time when the unsuccessful experiment was made by the barber of Midas, none of these gossiping gentleman have made a second attempt to *bury* a secret, the shaver of Amsterdam, on seeing Peter, called out "Dat is den Tzar!"—"That is the Tzar *!"

Indeed no one could mistake him who had

* Scheltema.

ever heard his person described. "The Tzar," says a Zaandammer, "is very tall and robust, quick and nimble of foot, dexterous and rapid in all his actions; his face is plump and round; fierce in his look, with brown eyebrows, and short curling hair of a brownish colour. His gait quick, swinging his arms, and holding in one of them a cane." The character of this extraordinary personage was developed much more in Holland than at home. He was here free from all restraint, and subject only to partial annoyance; the natural bent of his mind had, therefore, free scope. Little of his time was passed with the ambassadors; it was almost wholly employed among the ship-builders of Amsterdam, and Zaandam; and in sailing on the Y, the Pampus, and the Zuyder-Zee; and so much interested were the Dutch in all that he said and did, that regular entries were made in the *dag-register*, or diary, kept at Zaandam; and all those inhabitants, with whom he was in daily intercourse, made memoranda of what occurred, as far as their knowledge extended. Many of these little notices have been collected by Noomen, Calf, Van Halem, Meerman, and several others, who are referred to by Scheltema, in his *Rusland en de Nederlanden beschouwd.*

The cane which Peter carried in his hand was sometimes freely used, when any one attempted to thwart his movements. His first exploit in the dock-yard of Mynheer Calf, a wealthy merchant and ship-builder, with whom he was prevailed on to lodge, after quitting his first cabin, was to purchase a small yacht, and to fit her with a new bowsprit, made entirely with his own hands, to the

astonishment of all the shipwrights ; they could not conceive how a person of his high rank could submit to work till the sweat ran down his face, or where he could have learnt to handle the tools so dexterously. When this little vessel was ready for sea, he appointed *Gerrit Musch*, the brother of his friend, who died at Archangel, as his captain ; and both he and his wife, and the widow of the brother, had access to him at all times during his stay, and received from him many tokens of his regard in little presents of different kinds, all of which show that, notwithstanding his rude and violent temper, he was, in the main, a kind-hearted man.

He was frequently on the water, sometimes several hours in the day. His extraordinary rapidity of movement in landing or embarking used to astonish and amuse the Dutch, who had never before witnessed such "loopen, springen, en klauteren over the schepen,"—"running, jumping, and clambering over the shipping." The curiosity of the Dutch to see this extraordinary character brought whole swarms from that capital, on Sundays and holidays, so that all the windows and the house-tops in the street where he lodged were crowded with people ; but he confined himself closely to the house at such times, and would not suffer himself to be seen. The bailiff (*shout*), two burgomasters, and three members of the council, waited on him one day to request he would honour them by being present at the winding up, or dragging a ship over the dam : his answer, in a hurried manner, on seeing a great crowd, was, "Straks-straks"—"by-and-by ;" but observing the

multitude to have increased, he was visibly annoyed, and declined going, and with evident anxiety said, "Te veel volks, te veel volks" — "Too many people, too many people;" at the same time, throwing himself into a great passion, he shut the door.

The following day the crowds that beset his door were greater than ever, which again threw him into such a violent rage that he became convulsed. Peter had been subject to such fits from his early youth; which are said to have been first occasioned by the fright he received, when some of the Strelitzes forced themselves into the Trinity convent, and one of them held a naked sabre over his head, when by his mother's side before the altar. He was then ten years of age; but it is much more probable they were an original and constitutional disease, to which other members of his family were subject; and though they diminished in frequency and violence with years, they continued to afflict him occasionally till his death. The convulsive spasms generally came upon him when agitated or much excited, and he remained in them, sometimes, for whole hours. These paroxysms, it seems, always gave warning of their approach by a contortion of the neck towards the left side, and by a twitching or contraction of the muscles of the face; and, as these fits had never been observed during his childhood, it is not to be wondered at that some cause should be assigned for their production. Bassevitz, the Holstein envoy, ascribes them to the effects of the poison, supposed to have been given him by his ambitious sister Sophia, which is wholly unsupported

by any other authority, and is in itself an absurdity. That they were constitutional may be inferred from the fact, that all the male children of Alexis were more or less subject to fits, though none to such a violent degree as those with which Peter was affected; they differed from epileptic, and were more like those to which Buonaparte was subject, when thrown into a sudden gust of passion, and which, in his case, were called cataleptic.

On the present occasion, the Dutch gentlemen who had waited on him were exceedingly alarmed, but his companions, who had been accustomed to see him in paroxyms of this kind, sought out and placed before him a handsome young woman, whose presence speedily led to his recovery*. Count Paul Jagouchinsky is said to have made the discovery, by accident, when he was page to the Tzar. He always brought to him either the Tzarina Catherine, or, in her absence, the first young woman he met with, and left her alone with him; whether, he observes, the unexpected appearance of a young and beautiful woman, or the pleasing sound of her voice, exerted the powerful influence on his frame, it is difficult to say; but it is a fact that it had the tranquillising effect of subduing his passion and abating the convulsions†. It is well known that the sight of a *caracan*, or black beetle, had the effect of throwing him into convulsions; and why then should not a beautiful object produce the contrary effect of relieving him from them?

Subject, however, as he was to these bursts of

* Scheltema.

† Stæhlin; authority, Count Paul Jagouchinsky.

passion, Peter had so far command over himself as to act and speak with all humility and perfect obedience, when he conceived it necessary to set an example for others to follow. Thus, in entering himself as a ship-carpenter in the dock-yard, he strictly adhered to the regulations under which his fellow-labourers worked, and was known, at his own request, by the name of Pieter Timmerman van Zaandam; sometimes as Pieter Bass, or Master Peter; and generally, when in Amsterdam, as Peter Michaelhoff. It is stated in the diary of M. Calf, that he was an early riser, made his own fire, and frequently cooked his own pot. Mr. Titsingh, a most respectable gentleman, who died in 1812, at the age of eighty, was told by a sea officer, worthy of all belief, who was living in the year 1754, that he had seen Peter at his work, clad as a common workman, and that when any one wished to speak to him, he would go with his adze in his hand and sit down on a rough log of timber for a short time, but seemed always anxious to resume and finish the work on which he had been employed.

One day either the great Duke of Marlborough or the Earl of Portland, (the narrator is doubtful which, as both were known to have been at Zaandaam), came to the yard, and asked the master to point out to him, unnoticed, the Tzar among the workmen, as he wished much to see him at work. A number of the men were just then carrying a large beam of wood, close by the spot where Peter happened to be sitting at the time. Having shown the stranger the object of his curiosity, the master called out, "Peter Timmer-

man, why don't you assist these men?" Peter immediately rose up and obeyed, placed his shoulder under the log, and helped to carry it to its proper place. When at work in the East India Company's dock-yard at Amsterdam, he received a letter from the Patriarch of Russia, in answer to which he took the opportunity of observing to him, among other things, that "in Amsterdam he was obedient to the commands of God, which were spoken to father Adam, 'in the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread.'"

It was observed that Peter would lend a helping hand at everything connected with ship-building, such as rope-making, sail-making, smith's work, &c. On his return from his Archangel expedition, he gave proof of what he could do in forging iron. On visiting Muller's manufactory at Istia, he forged several bars of iron and put his own mark on each of them; he made the companions of his journey blow the bellows, stir the fire, carry coals, and do all the labouring work of journeymen blacksmiths. The Tzar demanded payment from Muller for his work, at the same rate as he paid the other workmen. Having received eighteen *altins*, 'This will serve,' said he, 'to buy me a pair of shoes, of which I stand in great need,' at the same time showing those he wore, which had already been soled. He then went to a neighbouring shop, bought a pair of shoes, and took great pleasure in showing them, saying to his companions, 'I have earned them well, by the sweat of my brow, with hammer and anvil.' A bar of iron forged and marked with his own hand is still in the ca-

binet of the Academy of Sciences at Petersburg, but this was forged at a later date at Olonetz*.

Not satisfied with working himself in the dock-yard, he insisted that Menzikoff and Golownin, and a third person, whose name the Dutch builders were not able to discover, should make themselves acquainted with boat-building and mast-making; but the third, who was of a sickly habit, got leave very soon to return to Russia. Menzikoff made some progress, but complained bitterly of his sore hands. It would seem, however, that they all, except Peter, affected to consider their labour as amusement only. Latterly they hired a large house, and lived all together merrily and frolicsome, with a professed cook, a skilful physician, and a priest.

On the public entry of the ambassadors into Amsterdam, Peter deemed it right he should take a part in the procession, which was got up with all the magnificence that their high-mightinesses in those days were able and accustomed to display. The three ambassadors went first, followed by a long train of carriages with richly-dressed livery servants on foot; but Peter, in the simple habit of a gentleman, was in one of the last carriages, such indeed, according to our custom, was his proper place, as here on all such occasions the tail is pushed forward while the head remains behind. But in Holland it is different; and in this situation he was not recognised, and therefore escaped the stare of the vulgar, which he seemed on all occasions anxious to avoid. The ceremony

* Nestesuranoi. Stæhlin; on the authority of Peter Muller, son of the above-mentioned blacksmith.

being ended, Peter was too happy to return to his favourite residence at Zaandam. He was, however, interrupted in his labours a second time, by a private visit he thought it right to pay to William III. King of England, and Stadtholder of the United Provinces, who was then at Utrecht, and afterwards at his private residence at Loo. The speech he made to King William, on this occasion, could not have been written by himself, but by one of his scribes, being full of bombast and fulsome adulation. He thus begins: "Most renowned Emperor! It was not the desire of seeing the celebrated cities of the German empire, or the most powerful republic of the universe, that made me leave my throne and my victorious armies, to come into a distant country; it was solely the ardent desire of paying my respects to the most brave and generous hero of the day," &c.

Having made a sufficient progress in ship-carpentry to satisfy himself, he now determined on seeing everthing that was new to him in Holland, and among other things to visit the Greenland fishing-ships. With this view he proceeded to the Texel, where upwards of a hundred of these ships had arrived from the fishery. He went on board several of them, inquired into the manner of catching the whales, how the blubber was cut off, the oil boiled, the whalebone cut out, and, in short, every thing appertaining to the whale-fishery. Nothing was considered by him too troublesome,—nothing about the fishing-ships too filthy,—while acquiring some knowledge of that lucrative species of commercial enterprise.

It was the same in all other matters: he visited all the manufactories,—all the windmills for grinding corn, pressing out oil, cutting plank, pumping water, making paper,—and examined the principles on which they were constructed. On seeing any new object he instantly inquired "Wat is dat?" and being told, he used to exclaim, "Dat wil ik zien"—"I shall see that." Ten times a day, while accompanying his friend Calf and others over different parts of the neighbourhood, were the words repeated—"Wat is dat," and "Dat wil ik zien.' His curiosity was unbounded, and the gratification of it not always free from personal danger. He was one day nearly entangled in the machinery of a windmill. On another occasion he mounted to the top of one of the large cranes on the admiralty wharf in Amsterdam, when his foot slipped, and he fell down on the pavement and injured his leg; and he was in the habit of carrying so much sail in his little boat, as to occasion constant alarm lest she should be overset*.

Peter's curiosity was by no means of that idle kind which leads to no profit; with him it was the inquisitive daughter of Ignorance and the prolific mother of Knowledge. Nothing came amiss to him. He frequented the markets, and was particularly amused with the mountebanks and venders of quack medicines. It might be said he was somewhat of a quack himself; he learned to draw teeth, and became skilful by a little practice in that operation. He attended

* Scheltema.

dissections in the hospital, and learned to bleed; and these useful operations he followed with great zeal after his return to Russia, and practised them with advantage frequently among his workmen and in the army, particularly bloodletting. Stæhlin says he had acquired sufficient skill to dissect according to the rules of art, to bleed, draw teeth, and perform other operations as well as one of the faculty,—that is to say, the Russian faculty, among whom surgery may be supposed, at that time, to have been at a very low ebb. He tapped the wife of a Dutch merchant who had the dropsy, but the operation having been too long deferred, the poor woman died, as the regular practitioners said she would; and by way of consoling the husband for his loss, the Tzar attended the funeral.

Peter, it would seem, was always ready to perform his good offices in the surgical way, and for that purposes always carried about with him a small case of surgical, as well as a case of mathematical instruments. Perceiving one day a valet of his, named Balboiarof, sitting with a sad and pensive countenance, he inquired what was the matter with him. "Nothing, Sire," answered Balboiarof, 'except that my wife has got the toothache, and refuses to have it out." "Does she!" said the Tzar, "let me see her, and I warrant I'll cure her." He made her sit down that he might examine her mouth, though the poor woman protested and insisted that nothing was the matter with her. "Aye," said the disconsolate husband, "so she always says that she suffers nothing, while the doctor is present." "Well, well," said

the Tzar, "she shall not suffer long; do you hold her head and arms." Peter caught hold of a tooth with the instrument, which he supposed to be the bad one, and drew it out with great expertness. A few days after this, Peter learned, from some of the household, that the poor woman's tooth ailed nothing, and that the whole was a trick of the husband to be revenged of his wife's supposed gallantries. Peter was not to be trifled with; his own sagacity was impugned by drawing out a sound tooth—the poor woman was pained unnecessarily, and a trick was put upon him; he called his valet and gave him a severe chastisement with his own hands *.

Peter finished his labours at ship-carpentry by assisting to put together a yacht, which, at the suggestion of the Burgomaster Witsen, was to be presented to him as a gift, in the name of the States-General. M. Witsen was a wealthy ship-owner, a great patron of science, having sent several persons at his own expense to make discoveries in Northern and Eastern Tartary; an account of which was published by him. Peter was constant in his attendance at the putting together of this ship, from the laying down the keel to her completion for launching. He gave her the name of *Amsterdam*, where she was built, and when ready, appointed the son of his deceased friend Musch to command her.

The Jews had been driven out of Russia since the time of the Tzar Ivan Vasilovitz. They now applied to this kind-hearted and liberal Bur-

* Stæhlin; authority Mr. Velton (Felton), chief cook to the Tzar.

gomaster to represent to the Tzar Peter their hard lot, and to pray they might be admitted to reside there on the same footing with other foreigners; and their petition was accompanied with the offer of one hundred thousand florins as the first mark of their gratitude, should it prove successful. The Tzar heard patiently what he had to say in their favour, and then replied, "My good friend Witsen, you know the Jews, and my countrymen's opinion of them; I also know both. In the light in which they are held by the latter, this is no time for them to think of settling in my dominions. You may, therefore, tell them from me, that I thank them for their offer, and that I should most truly feel compassion for them, were they to come and fix their abode in Russia; for, though they have the reputation of knowing how to cheat the whole world, I apprehend my countrymen would prove more than a match for them*."

By M. Witsen, Peter was introduced to all the learned men of Holland, and those who had in any way distinguished themselves in the arts and sciences. He attended regularly Professor Ruych's lectures in the dissecting-room, and his extensive museum of anatomical preparations. At lectures he used to sit on the lower bench close to the table, and one day, as the professor was explaining the connexion and the functions of the different parts of the human body, Peter, having heard and seen "how fearfully and wonderfully we are made," became so excited and

* Stæhlin; authority M. Hofy, a Dutch surgeon, who followed Peter into Russia. Scheltema.

anxious, that he jumped from his seat, and appeared as if he was about to snatch the scalpel from the hands of the dissector. He visited all the museums of natural history, and cabinets of coins and medals in Amsterdam; the houses of artists, engravers, and architects. He paid a visit to Leuwenhoeck, and was much delighted with his microscopes. He invited Bynkershoek, the learned writer on international law, to enter his service and go with him to Russia. At the Hague, the Baron Van Coehorn, the celebrated engineer, was introduced to him. Among other things he wished to see, was an execution of a condemned criminal: and he requested the Dutch government would let him know when such an event might take place. He accordingly attended the trial of two criminals, and was particularly observant of all that took place in the court, at the passing of the sentence, and afterwards at the execution. But it would appear that he thought the process too long, at least he profited not much by the careful and attentive examination, with which the documentary evidence was considered by the judges, before the sentence of death was passed on the criminals. For it so happened shortly after, that an affair occurred in his own household, which induced him to send two of the offending party to prison in irons, with a full determination of ordering them to be put to death. The burgomasters, however, gave him to understand that such a thing, in that country, and in their city, neither must, nor could, nor should, take place; they endeavoured with great earnestness to divert him from the point, and prevail on him to release the prisoners; but

all they could obtain from him was, that they might be released, on condition that the one should be sent on a voyage to Batavia, and the other to Surinam, as very slender punishments for the offence.

Whatever irregularities Peter might sometimes be guilty of himself, he never overlooked them in any of his followers. One of the priests of the embassy had been in the habit of indulging too freely in the use of gin. Peter one day saw him very much intoxicated, and immediately sentenced him, as a punishment, to turn the wheel in the rope-yard. He prayed forgiveness, showing his hands how wofully disfigured they were by this unaccustomed work; but all in vain. The only answer he got was, "Quick, quick to your work*."

To one little creature that he brought in his suite, he was particularly kind; and this was his dwarf, who accompanied him on all occasions of festivity, and stood at the table close to his elbow. One day when M. Witsen and some others were going in a carriage, and some one observed the dwarf had better go in another, as the Tzar might be incommoded, he said, "By no means," and took the Lilliputian on his knee. It is remarkable that, even to this day, these little creatures, whom nature has abridged of their fair proportions, are to be found in most of the palaces of the great, in Russia, gaily dressed in a uniform, or livery, of the most costly materials. Besides these, many have a different kind of animal, meant to correspond with our "motleys" in the days of Elizabeth, but

* Scheltema.

by constantly gormandising and sleeping, become so beastly fat and indolent, that they really are what nature has designed and habit made them to be—"fools." Whether for the gratification of their master's vanity, that in comparing himself with these beings, he may be able to exclaim with the Pharisee, "I thank thee, Lord, that I am not as this man;" or, whether of humility, by being put in mind how low human nature may be reduced; or, of mere curiosity, in having possession of a rare animal, the breed is, at any rate, still kept up. It would appear, however, that royal and noble personages, in more countries than Russia, are not indisposed to have some butt, be he dwarf, or jester, or fool, against whom they may hurl their cutting sarcasms and coarse jokes, and, without intending it, sometimes inflict wounds that cannot be retaliated.

It may not be out of place here to give an example of the grotesque and barbarous kind of exhibitions, from which the royal family, and the court nobles, could derive amusement. Natalia, the sister of the Tzar, once took the whimsical fancy to marry two of her dwarfs. She had several little coaches made for the occasion, and little ponies (Shetland, Capt. Bruce calls them) were provided to draw them; and all the dwarfs that could be got together, to the number of ninety-three, were summoned to celebrate the nuptials. A grand procession was marched through the streets of Moscow. First went a large open wagon, drawn by six horses, with kettle drums, trumpets, horns and hautboys; next followed the marshal and his attendants, two and two, on horseback; then the bridegroom and

bride, in a coach and six, attended by their bride-man and maid, and they were followed by fifteen small coaches, each drawn by six ponies, and each containing four dwarfs. "It was somewhat surprising," says Bruce, "to see such a number of little creatures in one company together; especially as they were furnished with an equipage conformable to their statures." Two troops of dragoons, and many persons of fashion, in their carriages, joined in the procession. A grand entertainment, after the ceremony was over, was given by the Princess, and the dwarfs dined together at two long tables, the Princess, with her nieces, Anne and Elizabeth, the Tzar's daughters, seeing them all seated and well attended before they sat down at their own table. "At night the Princess, attended by the nobility, conducted the married couple to bed in grand state, and the other dwarfs concluded the entertainments with a ball which lasted till daylight*."

While the Tzar was in Holland he received the agreeable intelligence of his army having obtained a victory over the Turks and Tartars, in the neighbourhood of the Crimea, in which vast slaughter was occasioned among the troops of the enemy, in crossing a river in their flight, when great numbers were drowned and others taken prisoners. An attempt was made by the Tartar galleys to seize upon Azoph, but the Russian vessels made an attack upon them, drove them back, taking several of them and sinking and destroying others.

* Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce.

The Russian forces were commanded by Prince Dolgorouki and General Shein.

On the news of this important victory, Peter and his ambassadors received the congratulations of the plenipotentiaries of the Emperor of Germany, of Sweden, Denmark and Brandenburg; but the French ambassador, offended at the Tzar having so warmly espoused the interests of Augustus, who had been elected King of Poland against the pretensions of the Prince de Conti, withheld this piece of civility, which the occasion and common courtesy would seem to have required. The only revenge taken by the Tzar was a determination not to visit France in the course of his travels. In celebration of this event, Peter gave a grand entertainment, to which all the officers of government, and the principal merchants of Amsterdam, with their wives and daughters, were invited. The sumptuous dinner was accompanied and followed by a band of music, and in the evening were plays, dancing, masquerades, illuminations, and fireworks. His respectable friend Witsen told him he had entertained his countrymen like an Emperor. "It was," says Scheltema, "a most agreeable surprise to behold at Amsterdam the followers of the embassy, a hundred hours (500 miles) from their birth-place, joining in their own country dances." The cheerfulness and good humour of the Tzar were particularly noticed by the Hollanders.

Peter having at last fully satisfied his curiosity in Holland, where he had spent nine months nearly, went for the last time to take an affec-

tionate leave of his friends and fellow-labourers of Zaandam, with whom he had been so closely and intimately connected for a great part of the time, and from whom he parted with a regret that was reciprocally felt on both sides. He proceeded to the Hague along with M. le Fort, and they had an interview with King William, when it was arranged that two or three ships of war, and one of the royal yachts, should be sent over to Helvoetsluys, in the early part of the month of January, to convey the Tzar and his suite to England.

CHAPTER IV.

The Tzar Peter visits England.

Two ships of war and a yacht, under the orders of Admiral Mitchell, were despatched to Helvoetsluys to bring over the Tzar, who, with his suite, consisting of Menzikoff and some others, whose names are not mentioned, embarked at that port on the 18th of January, 1698, and on the 21st reached London. Here no secret was attempted to be made of his rank, but he requested to be treated only as a private gentleman; and it is remarkable enough that, though he paid frequent visits to the King, and attended his court, his name never once appears in the only official paper which then, as indeed now, was and is in existence, the London Gazette. Lord Shrewsbury, at this time, was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; but as the Tzar came not in any public character, he appears to have been placed under the especial charge of the Marquess Carmarthen, who was made Lord President of the Council in the following year. Between this nobleman and Peter a very considerable intimacy took place, which was uninterrupted during the Tzar's abode in England. A large house was hired for him and his suite at the bottom of York Buildings, where, it is stated in a private letter, the Marquess and he used to spend their evenings together frequently, in drinking "hot pepper and

brandy." The great failing of Peter, indeed, was his love of strong liquors. We find in one of the papers of the day, that he took a particular fancy to the *nectar ambrosia*, "the new cordial so called, which the author, or compounder of it, presented him with, and that his Majesty sent for more of it."

Of the proceedings of the Tzar, during the four months he remained in England, very little is recorded in the few journals or other publications of that day; the former consisting chiefly of the *Postmaster*, the *Postman*, and the *Postboy*. The Postman opens the subject of the Tzar's arrival to his countrymen with the following just and judicious remarks:—"The Tzar of Muscovy desiring to raise the glory of his nation, and avenge the Christians of all the injuries they have received from the Turks, has abrogated the wild manners of his predecessors; and having concluded from the behaviour of his engineers and officers, who were sent him by the Elector of Brandenburg, that the western nations of Europe understood the art of war better than others, he resolved to take a journey thither, and not wholly to rely upon the relations that his ambassadors might give him; and, at the same time, to send a great number of his nobility into those parts through which he did not intend to travel, that he might have a complete idea of the affairs of Europe, and enrich his subjects with the arts of all other Christian nations; and as navigation is the most useful invention that ever was yet found out, he seems to have chosen it as his own part, in the general inquiry he is about. His design is certainly very noble, and discovers the greatness of his genius; but the model he has

proposed to himself to imitate, is a convincing proof of his extraordinary judgment; for what other prince in the world was a fit pattern for the great Emperor of Muscovy, than William the Third, King of Great Britain*?"

In the Postboy it is stated that, on the day after his arrival, the Tzar of Muscovy was at Kensington, to see his Majesty at dinner, as also the court; but he was all the while *incognito*. And on the Saturday following he was at the playhouse, to see the opera; that on the Friday night the revels ended at the Temple, the same being concluded by a fine masquerade, at which the Tzar of Muscovy was present; that on the following Sunday he went in a hackney-coach to Kensington, and returned at night to his lodgings in Norfolk-street, where he was attended by several of the King's servants.

His movements during the rest of the month, were a journey to Woolwich and Deptford, to see the docks and yards; then to the theatre, to see the Rival Queens, or Alexander the Great; to St. James's, to be present at a fine ball; and, it is further stated, that he was about to remove from Norfolk-street (York-buildings) to Redriff, where a ship was building for him; and that he was about to go to Chatham, to see a man of war launched, which he was to name: and that on the 15th of February, accompanied by the Marquess of Carmarthen, he went to Deptford, and having spent some time on board the "Royal Transport," they were afterwards splendidly treated by Admiral

* Postman, No. 417.

Mitchell. These are the principal notices concerning the Tzar Peter contained in the *Postboy*.

It is evident that London could not be very agreeable to him, on two accounts: first, because his great object in coming here was to see our dock-yard establishments, and to profit also by observing our mode of making draughts of ships, and laying them off in the mould-loft; and to acquire some knowledge in the theory of naval architecture and navigation, which he had heard, when in Holland, was superior to what he had seen or could obtain in that country, though it was assumed that the mechanical part of finishing and putting together a ship was there fully equal, if not superior, to ours.

In the next place, he was equally annoyed by the crowds he was continually meeting in the streets of London, as he had been in Amsterdam, and which he could not bear with becoming patience. It is said that, as he was one day walking along the Strand, with his friend the Marquess of Carmarthen, a porter, with a load on his shoulder, rudely rushed against him and drove him into the kennel. He was extremely indignant, and ready to knock him down; but the Marquess interfering, asked the man what he meant, and if he knew whom he had so rudely run against, and "that it was the Tzar." The porter, turning round, replied, with a grin, "Tzar! we are all Tzars here." But that which annoyed him most of all, was the intrusion of our countrymen into his lodgings, and into the room even where he was eating, to which they gained access through the king's servants. Disgusted at their impertinent curiosity, he would sometimes

rise from table and leave the room in a rage. To prevent this intrusion, he strictly charged his domestics not to admit any person whatever, let their rank be what it might. A kind of forced interview, however, was obtained by two Quakers, the account of which, as given by one of them, is singular and interesting:—

"*Anno* 1697. At this time *Peter* the Great Czar of *Muscovy*, being in *London*, incog., and *Gilbert Mollyson* (*Robert Barclay's* wife's brother) having heard that a kinsman of his was in the Czar's service, and being desirous to increase the knowledge of the truth, requested me to go with him, in quest of his kinsman, to the Czar's residence, a large house at the bottom of *York-buildings*, in order to present him with some of *Robert Barclay's* Apologies, in Latin; hoping that, by that means, they might fall under the Czar's notice, and be subservient to the end proposed. And accordingly we went one morning; and when we came to the place, *Gilbert* inquired of the porter after his cousin, and could not hear anything of him in the lower apartments, but was desired to stay till further inquiry was made in the house; and a servant went up stairs to that end, and when returned invited us up. The head of the staircase, on the first floor, brought us to the entrance of a long passage, which went through the middle of the house, and there stood a single man at a large window, at the further end, next the river *Thames*, to whom we were directed for intelligence: and as we passed along, we observed two tall men walking in a large room on the right hand, but we did not stop to look at them, only transiently as

we moved; for, supposing one of them to be the Czar, of whom I had heard that he was not willing to be looked upon, and careful not to offend him, we behaved with caution, and went directly to the person standing at the window, of whom *Gilbert Mollyson* inquired after his kinsman; and he told us that such a person had been in the Czar's service, but was dead.

"In the mean time came the Czar and the other to us; the other, I suppose, was Prince Menzikoff, his General. Our backs were towards them, and our hats on; and when they approached, the person with whom we had conversed looked down upon the floor with profound respect and silence; but we stood in our first posture, with our faces towards the window, as if we had not taken any notice of them. The person we had conversed with was an *Englishman*, a *Muscovy* merchant, known to the Czar in his own country, who understood his language, and was his interpreter. Then the Czar spoke something to him which we did not understand; upon which he asked us, 'Why do you not pay respect to great persons, when you are in their presence?'—I answered, 'So we do, when we are fully sensible of it, especially to kings and princes. For though we have laid aside and decline all vain and empty shows of respect and duty, and flattering titles, whereby they are generally deceived, by insincere and designing men, who seem to admire them for their own ends, yet we yield all due and sincere respect and duty to such, and all in authority under them, by giving ready obedience to all their lawful commands; but when at any time any of them, either

through tyranny or ignorance, or ill counsel, happens to command anything contrary to our duty to the Almighty or his Son Christ, our Lord, then we offer our prayers and tears to God, and humble addresses unto such rulers, that their understandings may be opened and their minds changed towards us.'

"The Tzar gave no reply to this, but talked with his interpreter again, who then asked, 'Of what use can you be in any kingdom or government, seeing you will not bear arms and fight*?'—To this I replied, 'That many of us had borne arms in times past, and been in many battles, and fought with courage and magnanimity, and thought it lawful and a duty then, in days of ignorance; and I myself have worn a sword and other arms, and know how to use them: but when it pleased God to reveal in our hearts the life and power of Jesus Christ, his Son, our Lord, who is the Prince of Righteousness and Peace, whose commandment is love, we were then reconciled unto God, one unto another, unto our enemies, and unto all mankind.'"

Thomas Storey goes on at great length, and actually preaches a sermon on this text, the Tzar patiently listening to what he could not understand.

"Upon this," he continues, "the Tzar took

* It is whimsical enough to see how different minds jump to different conclusions. When it was told that those amiable creatures of *Loo-Choo* had no arms and no money—"What!" exclaims Buonaparte, "no arms; how do they conquer other countries, or defend their own?" "No money!" says a kind-hearted Chancellor of the Exchequer, "how do they carry on the government?" And "of what use," says Peter to the Quakers, "can you be in any kingdom, since you will not bear arms and fight?"

several turns in the gallery, or passage, and then came and looked steadfastly upon us, though we did not seem to mind him, or know that it was he. Then I said to the interpreter, 'That we understood that there was a person of great dignity and distinction in that place, a stranger, very inspectious into the state of affairs and things in general; and, no doubt, might be also inquisitive into the state of religion; and we (being a people differing in some points from all others, and so much misunderstood and misrepresented in our own country, that even our neighbours themselves did not know us), lest that great prince should be misinformed, and imposed upon concerning us and our religion, had brought him some books, dedicated to the sovereign of our native country; by which he might please to see a full account of our principles.' We then produced two of the 'Apologies' in Latin.

"Then the Tzar talked again with his interpreter, who asked us, 'Were not these books writ by a Jesuit? It is said there are Jesuits among you *.' — To which *Gilbert Mollyson* replied, 'That is a calumny, and proves the necessity of our endeavours, in that respect, at this time. We have no Jesuits among us. Our religion and theirs differ very widely. This book was writ by a near relation of mine, who was not

* It is not without reason that Peter put this question. Just at this time a correspondence was passing between Bishop Tillotson and William Penn, the former having charged the latter with keeping up a communication with the Jesuits at Rome.

a Jesuit, but sincerely of those principles asserted and maintained in the book, as our whole community is.'

"And then the Tzar and interpreter talked together; after which the latter took some gold out of his pocket, and offered us for the books. But I told them, 'We were no such men as to want anything for the books, or otherwise. They were a present to that great prince and given freely: and all that we desired was that they might be acceptable; and that in case any of our friends should, at any time hereafter, come into his country, and preach those principles contained in the books, and if they should meet with opposition, and be persecuted, by any officers or persons in power under him, for the same, he would please to afford them protection and relief.'—Then they talked together again, and the interpreter kept the books; and the Tzar and Prince *Menzikoff* retired into the room from whence they came.

"They being gone, we asked the interpreter 'If that was the Tzar?' He said he was. Then we asked him if he had told the Tzar the substance of what we had said? And he said he had. Then we desired that if he asked him any more questions about us, and our religion, not to mention to him any of those rude calumnies, thrown upon us by ignorant and malicious persons, but the truth, to the best of his observation and information; and he promised he would. Then he told us, that the Tzar did not understand the *Latin* tongue; but only his own language, and *Dutch*. Then *Gilbert Mollyson* gave one of the

'Apologies' to the interpreter (for he had several with him), and so we departed in peace and satisfaction.

"This was about the beginning of the week, and the next first day the Tzar, the prince, and a great company of his other attendants, came in the morning to our meeting in *Grace-Church Street*, all in *English* habits, like English gentlemen, and the same interpreter with him. I happened to be there in the gallery, and the first I knew was *Menzikoff*. *Robert Haddock* had begun to preach a little before they came in, upon the subject of '*Naaman*, the captain general of the host of the *Assyrians*, going to the prophet for cure of his leprosy,' &c. [Here follows the substance of Robert Haddock's sermon.]

"And the Tzar and the interpreter were often whispering together in the time, though Robert Haddock knew nothing of his being in the meeting; and thus he staid very sociably, till observing the people crowd up before him to gaze, (which he could not endure,) he retired on a sudden, along with his company, before the meeting was quite over; for some people in the streets had seen him as he came, and, by some means, had discovered who he was, and crowded after him to see him more perfectly.

"After this he went *incognito* to *Deptford*, to improve himself in the art of ship-building, and there wrought at it with his own hands: and *Gilbert Mollyson* and I acquainting some *friends*, how we happened to see him, and had given him some books, and that he understood the *Dutch*, *William Penn*, *George Whitehead*, and some other friends, went to *Deptford*, and waited

on him privately, and presented him with more of the same books in that language, which he received very graciously. A conversation ensued between them in the same language, which William Penn spoke fluently. The Tzar appeared to be much interested by it, so that the visit was satisfactory to both parties. Indeed he was so much impressed by it, that afterwards, while he was at Deptford, he occasionally attended the meeting of the Quakers there, where he conducted himself with great decorum and condescension, changing seats, and sitting down, and standing up, as he could best accommodate others. Nor was this impression of short duration, for in the year 1712, that is, sixteen years afterwards, when he was at Frederickstadt, in Holstein, with five thousand men to assist the Danes against the Swedes, one of his first inquiries was, whether there were any Quakers in the place; and being told there were, he signified his intention of attending one of their meetings. A meeting was accordingly appointed, to which he went, accompanied by Prince Menzikoff, and General Dolgorucky, and several dukes and great men. Soon after they were seated the worship began; Philip Defair, a Quaker, rose up and preached. The Muscovite lords shewed their respect by their silence, but they understood nothing of what was said. To remedy this, the Tzar himself occasionally interpreted as the words were spoken, and when the discourse was over, he commended it by saying, that whoever could live according to such doctrines would be happy*."

Storey further states that the "friends" of Fre-

* Life of Thomas Storey, and Clarkson's Life of William Penn.

derickstadt related many things of a good tendency concerning the Tzar, one of which was this, "That he used quite another way with his officers, and others, than had been reported of him, when in his own country: for he was so familiar, that he would have them call him sometimes by his name, and seemed better pleased with that way than his former distance: only in times of their worship, which they sometimes held in the market-place, he would then, as is usual at home, resume great dignity on him; and one time, being rainy weather when they were at it, he wearing his own hair, pulled off the great wig from one of his dukes, and put it on himself, to cover him from the rain, making the owner stand bare-headed the while: for it seems he is so absolute, that there must be no grumbling at what he does, life and estate being wholly at his discretion."

The practice here mentioned, would seem to have been not unusual with the Tzar. One Sunday, being at Dantzick, on his second journey to Holland, he attended divine service, and was conducted by the burgomaster to his seat. Peter made the burgomaster sit down by him; he listened to the preacher with the greatest attention, keeping his eyes constantly turned towards the pulpit, while those of the whole congregation were fixed upon himself. Feeling his head grow cold, Peter, apparently unconscious of what he was doing, took the large wig, which flowed over the shoulders of the burgomaster, off his head, and put it on his own, to the astonishment of the good people of Dantzick. When the sermon was ended, Peter restored the wig, and thanked

the burgomaster by an inclination of the head. One of his nobles told the burgomaster that the Tzar was unmindful of such matters, and that it was a common custom with him when at church, as often as he felt his head cold, to take Menzikoff's wig, or that of any other who happened to be within his reach *.

One month's residence having satisfied Peter as to what was to be seen in London, and having expressed a strong desire to be near some of the King's dock-yards, it was arranged that a suitable residence should be found near one of the river establishments; and the house of the celebrated Mr. Evelyn, close to Deptford Dock-yard, being about to become vacant, by the removal of Admiral Benbow, who was then its tenant, it was immediately taken for the residence of the Tzar and his suite; and a doorway was broken through the boundary wall of the dock-yard, to afford a direct communication between it and the dwelling-house. This place had then the name of Saye's Court. It was the delight of Evelyn, and the wonder and admiration of all men of taste at that time. The grounds are described, in the life of the Lord Keeper Guilford, as "most boscaresque, being, as it were, an exemplary of his (Evelyn's) book of forest trees." Admiral Benbow had given great dissatisfaction to the proprietor as a tenant, for he observes in his "Diary"—"I have the mortification of seeing, every day, much of my labour and expense there impairing from want of a more polite tenant." It appears, however, that the

* Stæhlin; authority of Mr. Wahl, Syndic of Dantzick.

princely occupier was not a more "polite tenant" than the rough sailor had been, for Mr. Evelyn's servant thus writes to him,—"There is a house full of people *right nasty*. The Tzar lies next your library, and dines in the parlour next your study. He dines at ten o'clock and six at night; is very seldom at home a whole night; very often in the King's yard, or by water, dressed in several dresses. The King is expected there this day; the best parlour is pretty clean for him to be entertained in. The King pays for all he has *." But this was not all: Mr. Evelyn had a favourite holly hedge, through which, it is said, the Tzar, by way of exercise, used to be in the habit, every morning of trundling a wheel-barrow. Mr. Evelyn probably alludes to this in the following passage, wherein he asks, "Is there, under the heavens, a more glorious and refreshing object, of the kind, than an impregnable hedge, of about four hundred feet in length, nine feet high, and five in diameter, which I can still show in my ruined garden at Saye's Court (thanks to the Tzar of Muscovy), at any time of the year, glittering with its armed and variegated leaves; the taller standards at orderly distances, blushing with their natural coral? It mocks the rudest assaults of the weather, beasts, or hedge-breakers,—et illum nemo impune lacessit †."

Alas! for the glory of the glittering hollies, trimmed hedges, and long avenues of Saye's Court; Time, that great innovator, has demolished them all, and Evelyn's favourite haunts, en-

* Memoirs of J. Evelyn. † Evelyn's Sylva.

chanting grounds have been transformed into cabbage gardens; that portion of the Victualling-yard where oxen and hogs are slaughtered and salted for the use of the navy, now occupies the place of the shady walks and the trimmed hedges, which the good old Evelyn so much delighted in; and on the site of the ancient mansion now stands the common parish workhouse of Deptford Stroud.

We have little evidence that the Tzar, during his residence here, ever worked as a shipwright; it would seem he was employed rather in acquiring information on matters connected with naval architecture, from that intelligent commissioner of the navy and surveyor, Sir Anthony Deane, who, after the Marquis of Carmarthen, was his most intimate English acquaintance. His fondness for sailing and managing boats, however, was as eager here as in Holland; and these gentlemen were almost daily with him on the Thames, sometimes in a sailing yacht, and at others rowing in boats, —an exercise in which both the Tzar and the Marquess are said to have excelled. The Navy Board received directions from the Admiralty to hire two vessels, to be at the command of the Tzar, whenever he should think proper to sail on the Thames, to improve himself in seamanship. In addition to these, the King made him a present of the "Royal Transport," with orders to have such alterations and accommodations made in her, as his Tzarish Majesty might desire, and also to change her masts, rigging, sails, &c., in any such way as he might think proper for improving her sailing qualities. But his great delight was to get into a

small decked boat, belonging to the Dock-yard, and taking only Menzikoff, and three or four others of his suite, to work the vessel with them, he being the helmsman: by this practice, he said he should be able to teach them how to command ships when they got home. Having finished their day's work, they used to resort to a public-house in Great Tower Street, close to Tower Hill, to smoke their pipes, and drink beer and brandy. The landlord had the Tzar of Muscovy's head painted and put up for his sign, which continued till the year 1808, when a person of the name of Waxel took a fancy to the old sign, and offered the then occupier of the house to paint him a new one for it. A copy was accordingly made from the original, which maintains its station to the present day, as the sign of the "Tzar of Muscovy," looking like a Tartar.

His attention was forcibly attracted to the magnificent building of Greenwich Hospital, which, until he had visited it, and seen the old pensioners, he had some difficulty in believing to be anything but a royal palace. King William having one day asked him how he liked his hospital for decayed seamen, the Tzar answered, "If I were the adviser of your Majesty, I should counsel you to remove your court to Greenwich, and convert St. James's into a hospital *."

It being term time while the Tzar was in London he was taken into Westminster Hall; he inquired who all those busy people in black gowns and flowing wigs were, and what they were about?

* Stæhlin. Authority, Mr. Rondeau, English resident at Moscow.

Being answered, "They are lawyers, sir,"—"Lawyers!" said he, with marks of astonishment, "why, I have but *two* in my whole dominions, and I believe I shall hang one of them the moment I get home *."

In the first week of March, Vice-Admiral Mitchell was ordered to repair forthwith to Spithead, and, taking several ships, (eleven in number) under his command, hoist the blue flag at the fore-topmast head of one of them. It is not stated for what purpose these vessels were put under his command, nor was any public order given. But the "Postman †," under date of 26th March, says, "On Tuesday the Tzar of Muscovy went on board Admiral Mitchell, in his Majesty's ship the Humber, who presently hoisted sail, and put to sea from Spithead, as did also his Majesty's ships the Restauration, Chichester, Defiance, Swiftsure, York, Monmouth, Dover, Kingston, Coventry, Seaforth, and Swan." And the Flying-post, or Postmaster ‡, has the following intelligence: "The representation of a sea engagement was excellently performed before the Tzar of Muscovy, and continued a considerable time, each ship having twelve pounds of powder allowed; but all the bullets were locked up in the hold, for fear the soldiers should mistake." It is stated in the logs of the Humber and the Kingston, that they had two sham fights; that the ships were divided into two squadrons, and every ship took her opposite, and fired three broadsides *aloft and*

* Gentleman's Mag. vol. vii.

† Postman, No. 441. ‡ Postmaster, No. 449.

one alow without shot. The Tzar was extremely pleased with the performance. It is said, indeed, he was so much delighted with every thing he saw in the British navy, that he told Admiral Mitchell he considered the condition of an English admiral happier than that of a Tzar of Russia*.

On returning from Portsmouth, Peter and his party stopped at Godalming for the night, where, it would appear, from the bill of fare, they feasted lustily. Among the papers of Ballard's Collection, in the Bodleian Library, is one from Mr. Humphrey Wanley† to Dr. Charlett‡, which contains the following passage:—"I cannot vouch for the following bill of fare, which the Tzar and his company, thirteen at table, and twenty-one in all, ate up at Godalming (or Godliming), in Surrey, in their way home, but it is averred for truth by an eye-witness, who saw them eating, and had this bill from the landlord. At breakfast—half a sheep, a quarter of lamb, ten pullets, twelve chickens, three quarts of brandy, six quarts of mulled wine, seven dozen of eggs, with salad in proportion. At dinner:—five ribs of beef, weight three stone; one sheep, fifty-six pounds; three quarters of lamb, a shoulder and loin of veal boiled, eight pullets, eight rabbits, two dozen and a half of sack, one dozen of claret§."

* Nestesuranoi. Mottley.

† Author of "Wonders of the little World."

‡ Master of University College.

§ There are among our countrymen those who are scarcely outdone by the Tzar of Russia and his companions. At the same place, and probably at the same house, long known as *Moon's*, two noble dukes, the one dead, the other yet living, stopped, as they intended, for a moment, while sitting in their

It would appear, indeed, from all accounts, that the Tzar was a prodigiously hard drinker in his younger days. In a letter from Mr. A. Bertie to Dr. Charlett, and in the same collection, he says, "The Tzar lay the other night at Mr. James Herbert's, being come from Deptford to see the Redoubt*, which the justices have suppressed, by placing six constables at the door. Upon that disappointment he fell to drinking hard at one Mr. Morley's; and the Marquess of Carmarthen, it being late, resolved to lodge him at his brother-in-law's, where he dined the next day; drank a pint of brandy and a bottle of sherry for his morning draught; and after that about eight more bottles of sack, and so went to the playhouse†.

The Marquess of Carmarthen acted as his guide to all public places of amusement, for which, however, it does not appear Peter had any great relish, probably from not being sufficiently acquainted with our language to comprehend what was going on; twice or thrice only he went to the theatre, but the only object there that particularly struck his fancy, was an actress of the name of Cross, who was afterwards, so the gossip of the day had it, introduced to him; and this is the only amour, if it was one, that is recorded of the Tzar while in England. With the Tower of London he appeared to be highly pleased, more particularly with the beautiful arrangement of the armoury.

carriages, to eat a mutton chop, which they found so good that they each of them devoured *eighteen*, and drank five bottles of claret.

* It is presumed some notorious place of ill fame.

† Ballard's Collection. Bodleian.

The king having given a grand ball at St. James's, in honour of the Princess's birth-day, Peter was invited; but instead of mixing with the company, he was put into a small room, from whence he could see all that passed without being himself seen. This extraordinary aversion for a crowd kept him away from all great assemblies. Once, indeed, he attempted to subdue it, from a desire to hear the debates in the House of Commons, but even then the Marquess of Carmarthen could not prevail on him to go into the body of the house. He therefore placed him in some situation where he could hear and see what was going on without being himself noticed; perhaps he was on the brink of that hole in the ceiling which is now, on great occasions, frequented by certain ladies who dabble in politics, and by others from mere curiosity to listen to debates, from which, by custom and common consent, females have been excluded; paying the penalty of their defiance, by inhaling a neither pleasant nor wholesome atmosphere.

Having dined with the king at Kensington, he was prevailed on to see the ceremony of his majesty passing four bills; but, it appears from a note of Lord Dartmouth, that here, as in the Commons, he avoided going into the house. His lordship says, "He had a great dislike to being looked at, but had a mind to see the king in parliament: in order to which he was placed in a gutter upon the house-top, to peep in at the window, where he made so ridiculous a figure, that neither king nor people could forbear laughing, which obliged him to retire sooner than he intended."

From the same authority we learn that Peter

was, at another time, placed in an awkward situation. "The king made the Tzar a visit, in which an odd incident happened. The Tzar had a favourite monkey, which sat upon the back of his chair; as soon as the king was sat down, the monkey jumped upon him, in some wrath, which discomposed the whole ceremonial, and most of the time was afterwards spent in apologies for the monkey's misbehaviour*."

The Tzar is said to have paid a visit to the University of Uxford; but not a trace appears on any of the records of that University of his having ever done so. His body physician, Posnikoff, who stayed in England some months behind his master, is, however, known to have been there. Mr. Wanley writes thus, from London, to Dr. Charlett:—"I will wait on the doctor (Posnikoff), and if you had been pleased to have given me orders, I would have been at Oxford before now, for his sake, and returned hither with him again. His master (the Tzar) gave the king's servants, at his departure, one hundred and twenty guineas, which was more than they deserved, they being very rude to him; but to the king he presented a rough ruby, which the greatest jewellers of Amsterdam (as well Jews as Christians) valued at ten thousand pounds sterling. 'Tis bored through, and when it is cut and polished, it must be set upon the top of the imperial crown of England†."

He was introduced to the Archbishop of Canterbury, at his palace of Lambeth, and having

* Lord Dartmouth—Note in Burnet's History of his own Times.

† Ballard's Collection. Bodleian. With plain downright

expressed a desire to see the different churches of the capital, and to observe the mode in which the service was conducted, the Archbishop recommended Bishop Burnet to gratify his curiosity in this respect; and to give him all the information, of which none was more capable, that he might require on ecclesiastical matters. From this dignitary of the church we have some information respecting the manner and appearance of this extraordinary character. He says, he waited on him frequently, having been ordered, both by the King and the Archbishop, to attend upon him, and to offer him such information as to our religion and constitution as he might be willing to receive. "I had good interpreters," continues the Bishop, "so I had much free discourse with him. He is a man of very hot temper, soon influenced, and very brutal in his passion; he raises his natural heat by drinking much brandy, which he rectifies himself, with great application; he is subject to convulsive motions all over his body, and his head seems to be affected with these. He wants not capacity, and has a larger measure of knowledge than might be expected from his education, which was very indifferent; a want of judgment, with an instability of temper, appears in him too often and too evidently. He is mechanically turned, and seems designed by nature rather to be a ship-carpenter than a great prince. This was his chief study and exercise while he stayed here. He wrought much with his own hands, and made all about him work

simplicity, and free from all ostentation, Peter carried this valuable ruby to the king in his waistcoat pocket, and presented it wrapped up in a piece of brown paper.

at the models of ships. He told me he designed a great fleet at Azoph, and with it to attack the Turkish empire; but he did not seem capable of conducting so great a design, though his conduct in his wars, since this, has discovered a greater genius in him than appeared at that time. He was desirous to understand our doctrine, but he did not seem disposed to mend matters in Muscovy. He was, indeed, resolved to encourage learning, and to polish his people, by sending some of them to travel in other countries, and to draw strangers to come and live among them. He seemed apprehensive still of his sister's intrigues. There is a mixture both of passion and severity in his temper. He is resolute, but understands little of war, and seemed not at all inquisitive in that way. After I had seen him often, and had conversed much with him, I could not but adore the depth of the providence of God, that had raised up such a furious man to so absolute an authority over so great a part of the world*."

He goes on to say, "David, considering the great things God had made for the use of man, broke out into the meditation 'What is man that thou art so mindful of him?' But here there is occasion for reversing these words, since man seems a very contemptible thing in the sight of God, while such a person as the Tzar has such multitudes put, as it were, under his feet, exposed to his restless jealousy and savage temper. He went from hence to the court of Vienna, where he proposed to have stayed sometime, but he was

* Burnet's History of his own Times.

called home sooner than he intended upon a discovery, or a suspicion of intrigues, managed by his sister; the strangers to whom he trusted most had been so true to him that those dangers were crushed before he came back; but on this occasion he let loose his fury on all whom he suspected; some hundreds of them were hanged all round Moscow, and it was said that he cut off many heads with his own hands; and so far was he from relenting, or showing any sort of tenderness, that he seemed delighted with it. How long he is to be the scourge of that nation or his neighbours, God only knows*!"

It is always hazardous to prophesy, and the bishop was particularly unfortunate in his estimation of some parts of the Tzar's character. Had he been able to converse with him without the medium of an interpreter, he might perhaps have come to a different conclusion in some respects; though, at the same time, it must be owned, Peter had not then evinced much capacity or even ambition to take his place among the great statesmen and legislators of the world. Burnet thought that in matters of religious doctrine "he did not seem disposed to mend them in Muscovy." An incident however occurred, which proved he had already intended, on his return to his own country, wholly to reform and amend the state of the clergy and the church of Russia. It was this:—

Some of the principal merchants of London, through the intervention of the Marquis of Carmarthen, had prevailed on Menzikoff and Golownin

* Burnet's History of his own Times.

to propose a treaty with the Tzar to allow a free importation of tobacco into Russia, which was prohibited, or admitted only on payment of such high duties as amounted to a prohibition. The Tzar assented, but on condition only of their paying down to him twelve or, as some say, fifteen thousand pounds, for this exclusive privilege; stipulating at the same time that none should be imported into his dominions without the special license of the Marquess of Carmarthen, who, it is said, was to receive five shillings for every hogshead so licensed. Now the use of tobacco was abhorred by the priesthoood as an unclean thing and an abomination before the Lord; and this was stated by the chairman of the merchants, Sir Gilbert Heathcote, as a prejudice that might render the contract, as far as regarded them, of no effect; on which the Tzar observed, "He knew very well how to deal with the priests when he got home;" or, as Sir Gilbert himself told it, "When I return to my own country, you will find I shall make my priests preach and do what I please*;"—and it will be seen that he did so.

The bishop says he wrought much with his own hands, and made all about him work at the models of ships. Who he had with him, besides Menzikoff and Golownin, does not anywhere appear, but the Postman† of the 29th March says, "The Tzar of Muscovy is returned from Portsmouth to Deptford, where his second ambassador is arrived from Holland." The two principal Russian workmen in Holland, of rank, were Menzikoff and

* Mottley. † No. 442.

the Prince Siberski, the latter of whom is said to have been able to rig a ship from top to bottom. The object in remaining at Deptford would appear to have been, as before stated, chiefly, to gain instruction how to lay off the lines of ships, and cut out the moulds; though it is said, on the testimony of an old man, a workman at Deptford yard, some forty years ago, that he had heard his father* say, the Tzar of Muscovy worked with his own hands as hard as any man in the yard. If so, it could only have been for a very short time, and probably for no other purpose than to show the builders that he knew how to handle the adze as well as themselves.

When residing at Deptford he requested to see the celebrated Dr. Halley, to whom he communicated his plans of building a fleet, and in general of introducing the arts and sciences into his country, and asked his opinion and advice on various subjects; the doctor spoke German fluently, and the Tzar was so much pleased with the philosopher's conversation and remarks, that he had him frequently to dine with him; and in his company he visited the Royal Observatory in Greenwich Park.

As in Amsterdam, so also in London, he visited the manufactories and workshops of various artificers, and purchased whatever he deemed either curious or useful; and among other things he bought the famous geographical clock made

* Mr. James Siddon, who was a journeyman shipwright in Deptford yard when the Tzar was there; he died in 1769, aged 105 years.—*Annual Register* for 1769.

by Mr. John Carte, watchmaker, at the sign of the Dial and Crown, near Essex Street in the Strand, which clock tells what o'clock it is in any part of the world, whether it is day or night, the sun's rising and setting throughout the year, its entrance into the signs of the zodiac; the arch which they and the sun in them makes above or below the horizon, with several other curious motions*.' He was very curious in examining the mechanism of a watch, and it is said he could take one of these ingenious machines to pieces, and put it together again before he left London.

The king had promised Peter that there should be no impediment in his way of engaging, and taking with him to Russia, such English artificers, and scientific men, as he might desire, with such instruments as their trade or profession required. For this purposee he entered into an engagement with Mr. Ferguson, a native of Scotland and an excellent mathematician; and, at his recommendation, two young students from the school of Christchurch Hospital accompanied him. To these persons the Muscovite exchequer was indebted for the change from balls strung on a wire, the *suanpan* of the Chinese, to the simple Arabic numerals;—so tardy was the introduction into Russia of one of the most useful and important inventions that ever benefited mankind; but we ought not to be severe on the ignorance of the Russian exchequer, when we look at the notched sticks, called tallies, and the bar-

* Postman, No. 136.

barous jargon couched in equally barbarous cabalistic characters that, till very lately disgraced our own*.

The Tzar engaged also Perry, the engineer, for the purpose of superintending the construction of harbours, sluices, and bridges, which he had in contemplation; and more particularly to carry into execution the grand scheme of opening a communication, by means of canals, between the Baltic, the Caspian, and the Black Sea. He engaged also various workmen who had been accustomed to labour in the several branches of civil, military, and naval architecture. The fair promises, however, and even actual agreements, to which many of the persons had trusted, were broken not long after their arrival in Russia. The Tzar, or his officers, refused to let those who were dissatisfied return to their own country—they could neither obtain their arrears of pay nor passports. Perry complains that every obstruction was thrown in his way; that he could neither procure materials nor workmen, and that, at the end of six years, they deducted the monthly subsistence, which was agreed to be given him, from his salary, and paid him the remainder in depreciated coin. Ferguson's case was still harder; one part of his agreement was, that for every scholar, whom he taught navigation, and that was sent into the navy, he should receive one hundred roubles; and when Captain Perry left Russia he had so sent out seventy scholars, but had not been able to get one penny of

* In the present year this stigma has been or will be removed, and the statement of the public receipt and expenditure become intelligible.

the money. One of the young men from Christ's Hospital was murdered in the street, and the other never could get one half of the allowance that was promised. In short, the natives did all in their power to annoy and disgust foreigners. Peter, however, was less to blame for this neglect and injustice than his official servants. In the army, which was under his immediate eye, foreigners met with every encouragement, at least from the Tzar, and many of them were domiciled in Russia. A Scotchman of the name of Best, a lieutenant in the army, was among those who went with Peter from this country. The word *best* it seems signifies, in the Russian language, *beast*, which so annoyed the northern lad that he complained of it to the Tzar, who told him he would soon put him at ease on that score—'You shall be called *Bestuchef*, and then you will be as good a Russian as myself.' The son of this lieutenant was the celebrated Alexey Bestuchef, grand chancellor to the Empress Elizabeth*.

The number of all descriptions of persons that finally left England, when the Tzar returned to Holland, is stated to have been nearly as follows:—Three captains of ships of war, twenty-five captains of merchant ships, thirty pilots, thirty surgeons, two hundred gunners, four mast-makers, four boat-builders, two master sail-makers and twenty workmen, two compass-makers, two carvers, two anchor-smiths, two lock-smiths, two copper-smiths and two tinmen; making, with some others, not much less than five hundred persons. However uncouth

* Tooke's Life of Catherine II.

the manners of Peter may have been, he was a great favourite with King William, and the Tzar had also a high opinion of his Majesty, whom he visited frequently, and consulted on all important occasions. The king engaged him to sit for his portrait to Sir Godfrey Kneller, who painted a very good picture, said to be a strong likeness, which is now at Windsor, and the portrait at the head of this volume is engraved from it.

To convey the Tzar and persons above-mentioned to Holland, the Admiralty, on the 18th April, directed Vice-Admiral Mitchell to take under his orders his Majesty's ships Greenwich and Yorke, together with the Fubbs, Henrietta, Catharine and Mary, yachts, and to convey him, his ambassadors and suite to Holland; and to consult the convenience of his Majesty as to the arrangement of his company, and the port to which he might be desirous of proceeding. He remained but a short time in Holland, from whence he proceeded to Vienna, where he and his ambassadors were received with great pomp and splendour by the Emperor Leopold, and were entertained during their stay with dinners, balls, and concerts, in a style of magnificent hospitality. But entertainments of this kind were not exactly suited to the taste of the Tzar. His grand object, in visiting Vienna, was to make himself acquainted with the dress and accoutrements, the discipline, and tactics, of the Emperor's army, considered at that time to be composed of the best troops in Europe.

During his residence at the Emperor's court, Peter received accounts from the young nobles whom he had despatched to Italy under General

Scherematof, stating the preparations which the Senate of Venice was making for the reception of so great a monarch; and the desire which his Holiness the Pope had expressed to receive him in a manner suited to his high station, indulging a hope that his visit might have the effect, so long wished for, of re-uniting the Greek and Latin churches. One of the young persons sent to Venice was of the family of Golownin, a favourite of the Tzar; his instructions were to make himself acquainted with the construction of their galleys, and with the Italian language. This is the person probably who is said never to have quitted his room, that he might not have to reproach himself with seeing any other country than his own, which was considered by the Moscovite priests as a horrible crime. When, at the expiration of four years, he returned, and Peter took him to Voronitz, that he might there judge of the progress he had made, he soon discovered that he knew nothing of naval architecture. The Tzar good-naturedly observed, he supposed he had passed his time in studying the language and literature: he said no, he knew nothing of either. "Then what the devil have you been doing at Venice?" asked the Tzar. "Sire," he replied, "I smoked my pipe, I drank brandy, and very rarely stirred out of my room." Peter, half angry and half laughing, told him to get out of his sight, for that he was only fit to be made one of his fools.

At the moment, however, that Peter was preparing to set out on his journey to Italy, he received intelligence from Moscow that demanded his immediate presence in that capital. This was

nothing less than an account of a rebellion which had broken out among the Strelitzes, fomented, as most of the accounts stated, by the priests and the party of Sophia, who had infused into the minds of the people that the object of the Tzar's travels was to subvert their holy religion; to bring a host of foreigners among them; and to change the ancient manners and customs of his subjects; and that the first thing would be to cashier the whole corps of the Strelitzes. Thus abetted, these people, to the number of about 8000, marched from the borders of Lithuania towards Moscow, but were opposed by General Patrick Gordon. He first began to parley with them, and told them if they had any grievances he would see them redressed; but they would listen to no terms, and persisted in forcing their way to Moscow. A battle ensued, in which a great number of these infatuated men were slain, and the rest surrendered themselves prisoners, and were marched to the capital. Several examinations were made in order to detect the real abettors, and the object of the rebellion; and numbers were thrown into prison to await the decision of the Tzar, who would undoubtedly return with all speed, on being made acquainted with the disagreeable intelligence.

CHAPTER V.

The Tzar inflicts dreadful Punishment on the Conspirators—Commences his System of Reform—Death of Le Fort—Prepares a large Fleet at Voronitz, on the Don—Commences a War with Sweden.

We have yet seen nothing of the character and actions of the Tzar Peter, which could convey any impression but that of his being a lively, bustling, well-conditioned man; kind-hearted and grateful for any little attention bestowed on him; and that his errors or deficiencies were those of education only. He must now, however, be exhibited in an altered point of view. He had now seen a little of the world beyond the confines of Russia: he had now witnessed the comforts of that civilised and social life, which he found the people generally to enjoy under a free government, where commerce flourished, and the arts and sciences were cultivated and encouraged; and it can hardly be supposed that, amidst all his extravagant freaks and frolicsome manners, not always quite becoming the high destiny to which he had been called, he had been regardless of the importance of the situation he was about to fulfil, and of the duties that would be required of him. On the contrary, he gave many proofs that, without ostentation, he was employed in treasuring up lessons of experience, collected both in Holland and England. He had, besides, now attained a period of life when thought-

less levity may be expected to give way to sober reflection. He had a son, too, whose advancing years claimed a father's attention, in preparing for him an education more suitable than his own had been, for the heir-apparent to a throne, which, as far as human foresight could determine, he was destined to fill.

"During seventeen months," says a modern writer, "Germany, Holland, England, Austria, had their eyes on a young barbarian of five-and-twenty, whom a perfidious sister had delivered up, from the most tender age, to the most violent passions; who, delighting in wine, in women, in command—had left his absolute throne, a war successfully commenced, and all the seductions which besiege power,—to visit, with the compass, the hatchet, the scalpel, in his hand, their manufactories, their workshops, their hospitals, and to study practically those sciences which alone, in the midst of his subjects, he had judged indispensable to their prosperity, to their glory, to their independence. This example," he adds, "unique in history, is, without doubt, the example of a despot—a despot by birth, a despot by condition, by necessity, by the ascendency of genius, by temperament, and because slaves must, of necessity, have a master—but, what is most irreconcilable, a despot more patriotic, more constantly and entirely devoted to the welfare of his country, than any republican citizen, whether ancient or modern*."

* Histoire de Russie, &c. par M. Le Général Comte de Ségur.

Never, perhaps, in the history of the world, was a young monarch, possessed of supreme and undivided authority, "a despot by condition and necessity," placed in a more trying situation than that of Peter, on his arrival at Moscow. A third rebellion, fomented by the same instruments as the former, had broken forth in his absence, whose object was to subvert the government and deprive him of the throne. It is true, it had been quelled by the exertions and able measures taken by General Patrick Gordon; but the chiefs of the conspirators and the numerous prisoners had not been disposed of. It was, besides, the general belief that the members of his own family would be found among the agents and instigators of the undisciplined and lawless rabble; and that the trial and the punishment of the principal offenders should be left, till the arrival of him who was most deeply interested in the issue. It was admitted by all, who were not blinded by prejudice, that nothing was left to the Tzar but to destroy his enemies, or to become their victim; and such was, undoubtedly, the opinion they impressed on his mind.

Peter, therefore, at once determined, by an extreme severity of punishment, to crush any future attempt in the quarter from which he had every reason to believe the disturbances had proceeded. Accordingly, on the day after his arrival, he commenced his proceedings by ordering sumptuous rewards to be bestowed on the soldiers who had distinguished themselves against the rebels: all the agents, known or suspected to have been concerned in the revolt, were examined before the assembled senators, boyars, and military officers,

in his presence, and many of them sentenced to death. Some were first broken on the wheel, and then beheaded. Many were hung on gibbets, erected near the gates of the city. Numerous dead bodies of the first class of citizens were laid by the sides of the highway, with their heads near them, where they were suffered to remain, in a frozen state, the whole winter, as a terror and example to all passengers. Stone pillars were erected along the roads, on which were recorded the crime and punishment of the rebels. It is stated, in some accounts, that two thousand of the Strelitzes were put to death; but Gordon * mentions nothing of this: indeed, such wholesale murder is highly improbable. About four thousand had been put in prison; they, perhaps, were decimated, and the rest dispersed through the distant provinces of the empire.

The details of these executions, if true to their full extent, are horrible—and for the severity of them it is difficult to find apology or palliation: they appear to have been more than necessary, even in Russia, and under the very worst view that can be taken of the circumstances of the case. It is true that, in the time of Peter, heads were taken off with as little ceremony in Muscovy as in Morocco; but the Tzar had never yet shown himself a vengeful character, or that his mind was

* This is the author, Alexander, not Patrick; as the latter was the general who vanquished the rebels, it would have been very desirable that his manuscript journal had not been sent back to Russia: there is every likelihood that its publication would at least lighten the stain which foreign writers have endeavoured to fix on the character of Peter in this transaction.

steeled against the sympathies of human nature. He might have thought, with Hamlet, that, on the present occasion, "he must be cruel only to be kind;" and that a terrible example was necessary to prevent the recurrence of such a revolt. It is not to be credited, however, that he was such a monster as some of the foreign ministers at his court have represented; such as, in particular, a person of the name of Korb, secretary to the Austrian envoy, has published, in a journal written in Latin, filled with all manner of falsehoods and absurdities. This man says, that the Tzar ordered each of the judges to be the executioner of his own sentence; that Peter himself struck off the heads of eighty persons, the boyar Plescow holding the criminals by the hair, that his majesty might have a fair stroke; that Prince Boris Galitzin took off five and twenty heads, but so clumsily that the criminals suffered greatly; that Prince Rodomonowski performed no better; that not less than two hundred of the Strelitzes were roasted on piles of wood; and he further states, that M. Le Fort and Baron de Plumberg begged to be excused from taking upon them the office of executioners, alleging it was not the custom of their country; that the excuse was admitted, but, at the same time, the Tzar observed, "there was no sacrifice more agreeable to the Deity than the blood of a criminal."

Another of these diplomatic gentlemen, from the court of Prussia, of the name of Printz, has stated in his private memoirs, said to be deposited in the archives of Berlin, that, at a great entertainment given by Peter I., this sovereign caused to be

brought from their prisons about twenty of the Strelitzes; that, at each glass which he emptied, he struck off one of their heads with his own hand; and that he proposed to this envoy to try his skill in this business. An account of this exhibition, it seems, was sent by Frederick II. to Voltaire, who, however, had sufficient grounds, in the documents sent to him from Russia, for refusing all credit to the absurd tale of an envoy. It has been observed, indeed, that, in his history of Charles XII., he *had* credited the story. This is true, but, at that time, he had only the reports of those diplomatists. From them he there says, "He (the Tzar) has been known to execute with his own hands, his own sentences against criminals; and, at a table debauch, display his dexterity at cutting off heads."

These monstrous stories have, however, at a much later period, been copied by a respectable writer*, who ought to have considered the degree of credit that was due to the Austrian secretary, who professes his only authority to have been derived from some German officers in the service of Peter; and who, in all likelihood, were quizzing the secretary, or cramming him with food for a despatch to his employers. The statement that Le Fort was present at these pretended orgies is quite sufficient to prove the falsehood of such a story, but has not prevented a repetition of it by a modern author, whose imaginative genius and theatrical style are exercised to produce effect rather than to state fact. "The cruel Tzar," he

* Levesque, Histoire de Russie, published in 1785.

says, "from the height of his throne, assists with a dry eye at these executions; he does more; he mingles with the joys of the table the horrors of punishments. Drunk with wine and with blood, the glass in one hand, the hatchet in the other, in one single hour twenty successive libations mark the fall of twenty heads of the Strelitz*."

The same Korb, whose authority even Mr. Coxe says is to be depended on, talks of two hundred and thirty Strelitzes being hung up close to the windows of the nunnery in which Sophia was confined. Gordon, it is true, says, Peter caused a gallows to be set up opposite to the windows of her apartments, whereon he ordered three Strelitzes to be hung up, holding petitions towards her in their hands. This was a cruel and brutal act, even if Sophia, which was not proved, had any share in the conspiracy.

These executions being ended, and the whole body of the Strelitzes dispersed and drafted into the different regiments recently formed, the attention of Peter was immediately directed to a more pleasing, and, it is to be hoped, a more congenial subject,—the regeneration of his country, and the augmentation and better organisation of the regular army. The dress of the Russian soldier was on the Tartar model—a long coat reaching to the heels and belted round the waist, loose drawers not unlike a petticoat, a conical helmet or cap on the head, and a face covered with a long bushy beard—all which, besides the awkward appearance, was highly inconvenient, and served

* Histoire de Russie, par M. le Comte de Ségur.

only as a cover for indolence, inactivity, and filth. The objection to such a dress was equally applicable to civil as to military life: but he knew well enough the odium he would excite by shortening the skirts and shaving the beards of his subjects, and that some risk would be incurred, by attacking the ancient prejudices, the fixed habits, and the barbarous manners of a whole nation. He was aware that he would have to combat with thousands that were enemies to all reform, and to himself personally; and that the millions of serfs and slaves even would resist, if not resent, such an attack on their deep-rooted prejudices. Even those, who were most friendly disposed, grew frightened at the sweeping reform which they knew he had in contemplation—some from a general dislike of innovation; others, because their interests were likely to be affected; and others, again, for no better reason but a desire, that things should remain as they were, and had so long been, thinking probably with the simple Ophelia, "We know what we are, but know not what we may be." These considerations did not escape the Tzar, but he deemed it worth the trial, at some hazard, to remove the exterior emblems of barbarism, and to substitute the more decent and commodious garb of civilisation—and thus to remove the visible bar of separation between the Russian and the Western European.

He ordained, therefore, that not the army alone, but all ranks of citizens, should shave their beards, and dock the skirts of their coats; and that on all those, who after a given time should disobey the order, a tax should be levied of one hundred

roubles, which soon became a productive source of revenue, such was the pertinacity of preserving their beards, as a distinguishing mark from foreigners, for whom they entertained an inveterate hatred. The priests and the peasantry were only required to pay a kopeck every time they passed the gate of a city. The collectors of this tax gave a small copper coin as a receipt, on one side of which was stamped the figure of a nose, mouth, mustachios, and a long bushy beard, with the words "token of payment," and on the reverse, the date of the year*.

* Parmi les monnaies frappées sous le règne de L'Empereur Pierre le Grand, on remarque une pièce nommée "*borodovaia*," (barbue); elle portait en effigie une profil, avec une barbe. Elle se distribuoit aux Schismatiques qui payaient un impôt pour conserver le droit de porter la barbe.—*Le Comte de Laveau.*

On one side *Deuyee Vyeatee* —money received.

On the other *Goda*, An. 1705.

We have Peter's own account of the reform which he commenced in the year 1699. He says, he regulated the printing press—caused translations to be made and printed of different books on engineering, artillery, mechanics and other arts, as well as books of history and chronology. He founded a school for the marine, and by degrees those for other sciences and arts; schools also for the Latin, German, and other languages. He permitted his subjects to trade in foreign countries, which before they could not do on pain of death, and not only gave them permission but obliged them to go. He instituted the order of St. Andrew, the Apostle of Russia. He signed with his own hand, which his predecessors had rarely done, all despatches, manifestos, and treaties with Christian powers *.

Peter had soon seen the folly and inconvenience of preserving a calendar different from that of all other European nations. The Russians began their year on the first of September. Peter gave out an order that an alteration should be made, and that the year 1700 should commence, as among all other Christian nations, on the first of January, which day was to be celebrated by a general jubilee, and other great solemnities. This innovation, in the minds of the refractory priests, was even worse than antichrist; for as God created the world in the month of September, he meant the creation of it should be dated from that period. The great bulk of the people were puzzled to find out how the Tzar

* Jou nal de Pierre le Grand.

would be able to change the course of the sun. It required some time to reconcile the Russians to the change, and many of them continued to observe the old era; but when all the public offices, the courts of justice, and the army and navy, had adopted the new style, it very soon became general.

It had been the custom for ladies not to associate with the other sex, at feasts or entertainments, or, if admitted into the same apartment, they had always a separate table. When a young girl was about to be married, she was not allowed to see her betrothed till the day of the ceremony; and, among the nobility, when one of their sons was to take a wife, the usual practice was, as already mentioned in the case of the Tzar Alexis, to assemble all the young ladies of rank in some large room; and the young gentleman, who was in search of a wife, after examining the group, pitched upon the lady that struck his fancy most, and she became his bride. Peter not only abolished this absurd oriental custom, but, by inviting both sexes, whether married or unmarried, to his assemblies, the fashion of mixing together at their own houses became general; and he thus rescued the female part of the nation from a state of abasement little short of absolute slavery.

Peter had not been unmindful, when he instituted the order of St. Andrew, of the good effect produced by the distribution of honours and orders for meritorious services, in the armies of the sovereigns of Europe, whose courts he had visited; and that these decorations gave a brilliancy which was wanting in his own: and as these marks of

distinction cost nothing to the country, and flattered the vanity of those who obtained them, while they add nothing to their influence, he not only instituted the order above-mentioned, but appointed his favourite, Golownin, whom he had raised to the dignity of Admiral, as the first knight of that order, thereby marking his predilection for the naval service.

As the example, which Peter had himself set, could not well be refused by his subjects, he had less difficulty, in the formation of his new troops, in obliging the sons of the boyars and the kneezes (or princes) to serve in the capacity of common soldiers, before they could hold commissions as officers. Other young men, on the same principle, were sent to serve in his fleet at Voronitz, on the Don, and before Azoph, as common sailors, from which situation they were to rise to commands through the several gradations. He was particularly attentive to the building, repairing, and equipping a large fleet on the Don, in which he was assisted by the English officers that he had carried out with him, and those that had been sent from Holland. His grand scheme of joining the Don and the Volga, in which Brakel the German engineer had failed, was now resumed, under Captain Perry, who had also the direction of constructing basins, sluices, and careening wharfs for his squadron.

The Tzar having made his arrangements for giving official effect to these and some other innovations, set off for Voronitz to inspect the naval works carrying on at that place, but had not been long absent when the intelligence of the sudden

death of his much-esteemed and valued friend Le Fort reached him. This unlooked-for event overwhelmed him with deep distress. It was, in fact, the most severe loss that he could have sustained at this time, as it deprived him of that valuable assistance he had calculated upon, in bringing all his projects into successful operation. This excellent man was snatched away by an untimely fate at the age of forty-six, in the month of March, 1699. His remains were honoured by a public funeral, which vied with the magnificence of the most splendid obsequies that sovereigns are accustomed to receive. The Tzar hastened back to Moscow to assist in person in the funeral procession; and as this extraordinary monarch never acted without a motive, he took his station behind all the captains, as a lieutenant, the rank he bore in General Le Fort's regiment; in order that the nobility and his courtiers might see, that on no occasion did he lose sight of that respect which was due to merit and to military subordination. The remains were deposited in the Dutch reformed church in Moscow, where a monument was erected to his memory, bearing a long inscription in the Latin and Dutch languages. Thus the name of Le Fort will go down to posterity, along with that of his master, as a benefactor to the whole Russian nation.

It has been said that the extravagant proceedings of Peter, when on his travels in Holland and England, and his affected labouring as a common shipwright, were the mere freaks of a wild and unsteady young man, and tended to no useful purpose. The following letter, written by Mr. Deane,

a brother of Sir Anthony Deane, Commissioner and Surveyor of the Navy, dated Moscow, in March 1699, soon after the Tzar's return, will prove that such was by no means the case :—

Moscow, March 8, 1698-9, *O. S.*

"My Lord,—I have deferred writing, till I could be able to give your lordship a true account (from my own knowledge) of the *Tzar* (our master's) navy, which being a new thing in the world as yet, I believe, is variously talked of in *England*, &c. First, at *Voronize* there are already in the water and rigged, thirty-six, and to be launched in the spring, twenty more stout ships, from thirty to sixty guns. Next, eighteen very large galleys, (built after the *Venetian* manner by *Italian* masters) are already completed; and one hundred smaller galleys or brigantines are equipt for the sea: seven bomb-ships are launched and rigged, and four fire-ships are building against the spring, when they are all to go down to *Azoph*. The ships are chiefly built by the *Dutch* and *Danes*.

"At my arrival in *Moscow*, I fell very ill of the bloody-flux, which made me be in *Moscow* when his Majesty came home: about the latter end of *October* I was somewhat recovered; his Majesty then carried me down to *Voronize* with him. *Voronize* is about 400 *English* miles *south-east* from *Moscow*. There the *Tzar* immediately set up a ship of sixty guns, where he is both foreman and master-builder; and, not to flatter him, I'll assure your lordship it will be the best ship among them, and it is all from his own draught; how he framed her together, and how he made the mould, and in so short a time as he did, is really

wonderful. But he is able, at this day, to put his own notions into practice, and laugh at his *Dutch* and *Italian* builders for their ignorance. There are several pieces of workmanship, as in the keel, stern, and post, which are purely his own invention, and sound good work, and would be approved of by all the shipwrights of *England*, if they saw it. She has a round tuck, and a narrow floor, a good tumbling-home, and circular side: none are to exceed eleven *Dutch* feet draught of water. He has not run into any extreme, but taken the mediums of all good sailing properties which seem best. One may, methinks, call her an abstract of his own private observations whilst abroad, strengthened by your lordship's improving discourses to him on that subject, and his own extraordinary notion of sailing. One thing as to her keel is, that should it wholly be beat out, yet it is so ordered, that the ship will be tight and safe, and may continue so at sea afterwards *.

"I likewise made a suit of moulds for a ship of sixty guns, but after some time fell sick again: and at *Christmas*, when his Majesty came to *Moscow*, he brought me back again for recovery of my health, where I am at present; notwithstanding both our ships go forward, having put things in such a posture, as that a *Grecian* (who has been in *England*) carries on the business. Mr. *Ney* † is building a sixty-gun ship there too;

* This alludes to her bottom being one solid mass—a mode of building practised in Holland centuries ago, and on the west coast of India centuries before that, but which is a recent *invention* with us.

† Another English shipwright.

besides, there are four of that size (near built) upon the *Don*, two of forty guns already at *Azoph*, carried down some time since, and a great many galleys, &c.

"The river *Vorona* at *Voronize*, when I was there, was hardly so broad as the ships are long: but in the spring, about the latter end of *April*, or beginning of *May*, when the snow melts, there is sixteen feet water in that little river, which continues this height about twelve or fourteen days, with a rapid torrent, with that force, that though it be 1000 miles down to *Azoph*, yet the ships will easily be there in nine or ten days.

"His Majesty was at my chamber two days of last week, with Mr. *Styles*, as interpreter (who gives his humble duty to your lordship). You may guess what his Majesty came to be informed in, whilst he was there. I showed him a model of a machine to bring up the *Royal Transport* to the *Volga*, at seventeen inches draught of water; he was pleased to like it, but gave no orders for putting it in execution, so, I believe, she will lie where she is now, and perish. Here are three envoys, viz., the *Emperor's*, the *Danes'*, and *Brandenburg's*, in this *Slabodo* (as it is called), which lies from *Moscow* as *Lambeth* does from *London*. The whole place is inhabited by the *Dutch*; I believe there may be four hundred families. Last *Sunday* and *Monday* the strangers were invited to the consecration of General *Le Fort's* new house, which is the noblest building in *Russia*, and finely furnished. There were all the envoys, and, as near as I could guess, two hundred gentlemen, *English*, *French*, and *Dutch*, and about as many ladies;

each day were dancing and music.—All the envoys and all the lords (but three, in *Moscow*) are going to *Voronize*, to see the fleet, I suppose.

"His *Majesty* went, last *Sunday*, to *Voronize*, with Prince *Alexander*, and I am to go down (being somewhat recovered) with the vice-admiral, about six days hence. This day was a muster of all the seamen and officers of his Majesty's service, three-fourths of which are discharged. They are to go home by the way of *Narva*. Captain *Perry*, who was sent to make a communication between the rivers *Volga* and *Don*, near *Astracan*, is returned from surveying the same; he makes it appear feasible enough to be done; accordingly his Majesty has ordered forty thousand men to be raised, and materials provided for doing the same; which he has promised to finish in five years, though I believe it may be done in less. When that is performed, then the Tzar may carry his ships from the *Black Sea* into the *Caspian Sea*, and extend his conquest that way.

"*My Lord*, what I have writ, I wish it may be any satisfaction to your lordship, and I have my end, who am, &c. JOHN DEANE.

"Postscript.—Since my writing this, General *Le Fort* is dead of a high fever; and we expect his Majesty up this night from *Voronitz**."

This letter affords abundant proof how much this extraordinary young monarch had profited by his travels. Indeed there is no parallel, in ancient or

* A letter, from Moscow, to the Marquess of Carmarthen, relating to the Tzar of Muscovy's forwardness in his great navy, &c. since his return home. *By John Deane.* This gentleman died at Moscow the same year.

modern history, of a powerful and absolute sovereign, in the undisputed possession of the throne of a most extensive empire, ruling with unlimited sway, uncontrolled by any other authority—of a prince, in the full vigour of life, with the most ample means of indulging in the gratification of every luxury and pleasure that fancy, or caprice, or passion could suggest—of a youth of five and twenty, relinquishing all the enjoyments and all the fascinations that are supposed to court the high and palmy state of a throne, abandoning them all—and for what?—to travel in foreign countries, as an obscure individual, for the sake of acquiring personal and practical information and instruction; sacrificing every luxury and every pomp, which wealth and regal power could command, and submitting himself to undergo the daily drudgery, the mean clothing, and frugal diet, of a common working shipwright.

The Tzar, having performed the last obsequies to his friend, returned to his favourite dock-yard, at Voronitz, where a vast number of foreigners, of all descriptions, had been collected, consisting generally of English, Dutch, German, and Italian artificers. Peter mixed with these without ceremony, dressed generally like the workmen, in a round hat, jacket, and trousers, paying great attention to everything that was going on, conversing freely with the Dutch more especially, whose language he perfectly understood. If he happened to see some poor fellow struggling with his loaded wheelbarrow, he would put him aside, and seizing hold of the handles, trundle it away to the required spot. Sometimes he would take a spade and show

the people how to use it to the best advantage. When an accident happened to any of the workmen, he was always the first to afford them relief, to dress their wounds, if necessary, to bleed them, at which he was particularly expert.

While thus superintending the workmen, and bustling about the whole day, he was always placid and in good humour, appearing quite a different person from the stern sovereign, who had so recently dealt out those terrible punishments at Moscow, from the judgment-seat of which, it would seem as if he fled hither to calm and relieve his exasperated feelings. Peter was, in truth, cruel from circumstances, and not by nature; a thousand little traits proved the kindness of his disposition, more particularly to those who stood most in need of experiencing it. It was his custom frequently to visit, in their humble abodes, his subjects of the lower classes; and he never refused to hold their little ones at the baptismal font; a condescension for which he had perpetual calls from one class or other of his subjects. To the first-born of the officers and soldiers of his own regiment of guards he almost always was called upon to stand godfather; and contented himself with giving a kiss to the mother, and putting a rouble, and sometimes a ducat under the pillow. The Empress Elizabeth told Stæhlin that young Peter, son of the unfortunate Alexis, having one day mentioned to her that he had sent a hundred ducats to the wife of an officer of the guards, to whose child he had stood godfather, she told him that, if he acted so magnificently, he must be provided with a heavy purse. "My father," said the empress, "who stood

sponsor to as many as wished it, and who refused none, did not do so—a kiss to the mother, and a ducat under the pillow, were all, and the parents were well satisfied."

On his return to, and short residence at, Moscow, he mixed more familiarly than before with the respectable part of the inhabitants, and made frequest visits to the foreign ministers and foreign merchants settled there. These visits, indeed, were not always quite convenient to those who received them, as he was sometimes accompanied by a train of fifty or sixty persons. The Dutch Envoy requested the States-General to make him an allowance, to meet the extraordinary expense. The visits of sovereigns, however flattering to the vanity of those individuals whom they are pleased to honour, are frequently attended with so much inconvenience, that they should be "like angel visits, *short* and far between *."

We have a specimen, in that honest Dutch traveller, Cornelius Le Bruyn, of the familiar and easy manner in which Peter conversed with strangers. Le Bruyn happened to be present at one of those visits made by the Tzar at the house of a Dutch merchant of the name of Brandt, and this, the traveller conceived, gave him the privilege of making his profound respects to his Majesty, the next time he came into his presence. Peter looked at him, and asked him, in Dutch, "Hoe wiet zy wie ik ben, en hoe komt zy my te kennen?"—How know you who I am, and how came you to know me? "I answered,"

* The poet Campbell, in taking this line from Young, has improved neither the rhythm nor the sense, by the change of *short* to *few*, for the mere sake of the alliteration.

says Le Bruyn, "that I had seen his portrait in London, and that it had made too strong an impression on my mind not to recollect it." This not appearing satisfactory to the Tzar, Le Bruyn added that he had seen his Majesty at his friend Brandt's. He then overwhelmed him with a whole volley of those sort of questions, which would appear to form a kind of royal catechism for all nations. "He asked me of what city I was—who my parents were—if they were still living—if I had any brothers or sisters? He then inquired as to my former travels—in what year I had undertaken them—how long I had been about them—in what manner I made them, and how I returned from them—and a multitude of questions of this kind."

Le Bruyn, one day after this, met the Tzar at the palace of Menzikoff, making experiments with some fire-engines. On seeing him, he desired he would go with him into the house, saying, "You have seen a great number of things, but I doubt whether you ever met with what I am going to show you;" at the same time ordering a poor miserable object to be brought before him, and that his clothes should be taken off. Le Bruyn describes him as having an excrescence, just above the navel, about the length of a hand, and four inches thick, through which almost all the nourishment he took came out, in a half-digested state; and adds, that the poor man had been in this condition for nine years. The Tzar, he says, appeared to take a great interest in the sufferings of this unhappy Russian *.

The immediate object of the fleet of gun-boats

* Voyage de Cornelius Le Bruyn.

and other vessels, which the Tzar was building and preparing on the Don, was the protection of Azoph; but the ultimate view was, no doubt, as already observed, to push his conquests to the shores of the Black Sea. Nor was the accomplishment of this great point, which might afford him the free navigation of that inland sea, sufficient to satisfy his ardent desire for the prosperity and improvement of his country. From the great ocean he would still be excluded; and he was fully aware that the navigation of this alone could afford him a free communication with the maritime states of Europe. He had seen enough on his travels to convince him that unfettered commerce was the great source of civilisation and wealth. The forest of masts that met his eye every where on the Thames, the number of ships that crowded the ports and canals of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, could not fail to convince a person of his penetration, that Russia, to be great, must have some other port, connected with the great ocean, than the only one she then possessed, at the northern extremity of his dominions, which was accessible for shipping only six months in the year, by a sea that was frozen up the other six, and at all times dangerous; and removed to a great distance, too, both from the maritime nations of western Europe, and from his own capital. But the barbarous people, whom it was his destiny to enlighten, were averse from any extension of commercial intercourse. What, indeed, could be hoped from a people so immersed in ignorance as to persuade themselves, that the foreign ships which came to Archangel for their corn and timber, their hemp, hides, and

tallow, resorted thither, as to a country which was the granary and storehouse of all Europe? The Chinese say, that heaven has conferred on the Celestial Empire a plant, which it has refused to all other nations of the earth; but that their heavenly emperor, in his great benevolence, has kindly permitted the *Fan-quei*, or barbarous brutes of other countries, to participate in the enjoyment of this precious blessing. Thus also the Russians, like the Chinese with their tea, were pleased to think it a great indulgence to let foreign traders take away the precious products of their soil, which nature had denied to other countries, and without which the natives of those countries would be in danger of perishing through cold and famine.

It was no easy matter for the Tzar, all powerful as he was, to convince such barbarians that, to make them a great and flourishing people, they must have what another great captain so fiercely thirsted for, "Ships, colonies, and commerce." These were the objects on which it was apparent he constantly kept his eye. The encouragement which he gave to learned men to traverse the untrodden regions of Siberia—the mission of Ysbrant Ides to China—the attempts to open a commerce with India, by the Caspian Sea, through Bucharia—the expedition of Behring to discover a north-east passage, with instructions written with his own hand—all tended to one and the same object—that of making Russia a great commercial nation.

Still, however, something was considered to be wanting to complete his views in this respect—and that was a free and uninterrupted communication

with the great ocean;—an object which, it appeared to him, could only be obtained by having the command of the one or the other coast of that part of the Baltic, called the Gulf of Finland; and both of these had long been, and still were, in the possession of the Swedes, who had also the two banks of the Neva, up to the lake of Ladoga. Thus he found himself hemmed in on every side, in the only quarter where his ardent wishes could be accomplished. He had seen Riga on his travels, and met there with a blunt refusal to be admitted into the citadel; he said little at the time, except that he should probably meet with more civility at his next visit, for he hoped to see the day, when he should have the honour to refuse the same piece of civility to the king of Sweden himself. Something more than is stated by authors must here have occurred; for Peter, in his journal, asks Augustus, King of Poland, to avenge the insult which D'Alberg had offered him, "où il put à peine sauver sa vie *." The fine position of Riga at the bottom of the gulf of Livonia, opening into the Baltic, and the recollection of its having once belonged to Russia, were not lost to his penetrating mind. An opening now presented itself on which he was but too ready to seize; it was that of a combined offensive alliance of three powers against Sweden, which promised a fair chance of putting him in possession of the grand object of his wishes; and without such assistance, considering the recent formation of his army, he could not hope to obtain it single-handed against the old and well-disciplined troops of that nation.

* Journal de Pierre le Grand.

The greater part of Livonia and Esthonia had been ceded by Poland to Charles the Eleventh of Sweden. Augustus, the Elector of Saxony, having been called by choice to the throne of Poland, conceived the design of recovering these provinces. Peter, at the same time, was meditating his grand scheme of national improvement, and had resolved to begin by endeavouring to make himself master of Ingria and Carelia. The king of Denmark, who had suffered greatly from the Swedish arms, hastened to conclude a league with the Tzar and Augustus, against the young king of Sweden Charles XII., who was now (1700) only eighteen years of age. The objects then of the war to be undertaken by these confederates were threefold, —for Russia, the reunion of Ingria and Carelia, —for Poland, the recovery of Livonia and Esthonia;—and, for Denmark, the provinces of Holstein and Sleswick. The Tzar was the more ready to enter into this confederacy, as he had just succeeded in concluding a truce for twenty-five years with the Turks, and, therefore, was not likely to have occasion to draw off his forces towards the southward.

Sweden became alarmed at the report of the preparations that were making against her, and had little confidence in the young king, who had hitherto shown no inclination for public business, nor evinced any ardour for military pursuits. It was, therefore, proposed in council, at which Charles sat, to avert the storm by negociation, when the young prince, with great gravity and a resolute tone, said, "I am resolved never to enter upon an unjust war, nor to end a just one but by

the destruction of my enemies. I will attack the first who shall declare against me, and when I have conquered him, I may hope to strike terror into the rest*." From that moment he renounced all his former habits and amusements. Eight thousand men were immediately marched into Pomerania, and he embarked himself with his prime minister, Count Piper, and General Renschild, in a ship of a hundred and twenty guns; and, with a fleet of upwards of forty sail, offered battle to the Danish fleet, which was declined; he then steadily pursued his course, and prepared to lay siege to Copenhagen, but obtained 400,000 rix-dollars from the deputies who were sent to him to negociate, as the condition for his abstaining from the bombardment of the city. In short, he compelled the king of Denmark, within six weeks, to sign a peace, which restored Holstein to the duke, its lawful sovereign, and indemnified him for all the expenses of the war.

The king of Poland was not more successful. He laid siege to Riga, the capital of Livonia; and received notice that the Tzar was on the march with a hundred thousand men to join him. Count Fleming commanded the Polish forces, but the experience of the old Count d'Alberg, the same who refused Peter leave to enter the citadel, rendered all the efforts of the besiegers fruitless; and the king of Poland, despairing of success, availed himself of a plausible pretext for raising the siege. Riga was at that time full of merchandise, belonging to the Dutch. The States-General ordered

* Voltaire's Hist. of Charles XII.

their ambassador to the king Augustus, to make proper representations to him on the subject. "The king of Poland," says Voltaire, "did not stand in need of much entreaty. He consented to raise the siege, rather than occasion the least injury to his allies; who were not immoderately surprised at his excessive complaisance, as they knew the real cause of it." Thus the young king of Sweden, relieved entirely from one of the confederates, and having defeated the object and dispersed the army of the second, was now left to prepare a force to oppose the designs of the third, which, though by far the most powerful, confident in the discipline of his troops, he affected to despise.

CHAPTER VI.

The Battle of Narva—Peter's success against the Swedes—History of Catharine.

If experience in the art of war, and success in military operations, are to be the test of an able general, Peter had as yet but slender claims to that title. He had behaved most gallantly at the siege of Azoph, and his efforts were crowned with triumph; but, on engaging in a war with Sweden, he had a far other enemy to encounter than Turks or Tartars. Charles, it is true, was but a boy, as inexperienced as Peter could be in the art of war; but he had able generals, and a well disciplined army, which the other had not; with the exception of a very small portion of either. Charles had, besides, an army frequently flushed with victory. The die, however, was cast, and Peter lost no time in invading Ingria with a force of 60,000 men, the march of whom was preceded by a manifesto, which did his cause no good; as the chief complaint he had to make therein, against Sweden, was the indignity he conceived to have been put upon him at Riga, and the enormous prices, which his ambassadors, who were then travelling with him, had been charged with for provisions at that place. Such were the frivolous reasons, which the Tzar avowed as determining him to plunge into what, nevertheless, he, no doubt, considered a just and necessary war against the young king of Sweden.

Peter's first hostile operation was to lay siege to Narva, a place of considerable strength on the river Narowa, which flowed through a part of his own dominions, out of the lake Peipus into the Baltic. The first division took up their ground before the place on the 20th September, and the siege continued to the 19th November, on which day the Russians were attacked, and, after a short but furious conflict, were under the necessity of asking for a suspension of arms.

On the preceding day, as appears from the Tzar's own journal, or history of his campaigns, Peter had left the army, and gone to Novogorod, to hasten some regiments, which were on their march, to join the forces before Narva; but this, it would appear, was not the only cause of his departure from the camp. It was necessary he should have an interview with the king of Poland, in consequence of his having raised the siege of Riga, in order that they might deliberate together concerning the common measures most expedient to be pursued. For this purpose he took with him the Marshal Count Golownin, minister of foreign affairs, (not Menzikoff, as Voltaire says,) leaving the command of the army with the Duke De Croi, a Flemish officer, and the Commissary-General Prince Dolgorouki.

Charles lost no time in passing over about 9000 men into Livonia; he himself marched northwards towards Revel, driving from the neighbourhood of that place an advanced body of Russians. On approaching Narva, he found the Russian army in their entrenchments, lined with more than a hundred and forty pieces of cannon; and, as

various writers have it mustering from eighty to a hundred thousand men. Peter himself, however, does not make them amount to half that number; and General Gordon says, the whole of the Tzar's army did not exceed 50,000 men, of whom 12,000 were at Novogorod*. Whatever the aggregate number of the Tzar's army might have been, it consisted chiefly of the old Strelitzes, and the corps of twelve thousand men, that were regularly disciplined under Le Fort; the rest were raw recruits and serfs, drawn from the woods and wilds, clothed in skins, and armed with clubs and pikes, who knew not the use of fire-arms, and had never seen either battle or siege†. General Gordon (who was in the battle) says, "Being all new raised troops, except the regiment of guards, which was of a piece with the rest, in having never been engaged before with disciplined troops, and few good officers as yet amongst them, it was no miracle to see an army of inexperienced, raw troops, consisting of about thirty-four thousand men, entrenched, beat by a body of about nine thousand veterans, as good troops, and as well commanded, as any in Europe, with so resolute a prince at their head ‡."

General Gordon considers the entrenched position of the Russians as having been the source of a fatal security and neglect. Charles, nothing dismayed by these superior numbers, having driven in all the Russian outposts, and availing himself of a violent storm of wind and snow, which blew directly in face of the enemy, at-

* Gordon's Hist. Journal de Pierre le Grand.
† John Mottley.
‡ Gordon's Hist. of Peter the Great.

tacked their entrenchments with his few pieces of cannon; and, falling upon the Russians before they had time to recover themselves, a panic seized them, which diffused itself throughout the whole army. Every man quitted his post, and the Swedes had nothing more to do than to kill and destroy a mass of men, who impeded each other in their endeavours to escape;—just as a handful of our troops, in storming a Burmese stockade, crowded with the enemy's troops, hacked and slew the undisciplined rabble that blocked up the only passage by which they attempted to escape. Many of the Russian fugitives threw themselves into the river, and were drowned; others flung away their arms and begged, on their knees, for quarter. The Duke de Croi, General Allard, and almost all the German officers in the service, more afraid of their own mutinous Russians than of the Swedes, surrendered themselves, at once, to Count Steinbok. All their artillery fell into the hands of the king of Sweden. The Tzar, in his journal, says it was surrendered by convention, in which it was stipulated that six regimental pieces were to be kept, but that the Swedes broke faith, and did not restore these. He says also that it was agreed the troops were to retire with their arms and colours, which was allowed to the division of General Golownin, but that, when the division of General Weyde marched off, the Swedes not only began to take from them their muskets and colours, but stripped them of their clothes. The officers, sent as prisoners to Stockholm, were, one field-marshal, and six generals, eight colonels, four lieutenant-colonels, six majors, fourteen captains, besides subalterns;

and two generals and four field officers of the Saxon auxiliaries. Peter estimates the number of his men killed to amount from 5800 to 6000, and that of the Swedes, by report, to 3000, and states that the number of his troops that returned to Novogorod was 22,967.

"Thus," says the Tzar, "it is indisputable, that the Swedes obtained a victory over our troops, which as yet were but an ill-disciplined militia; for in this action there was no other old regiment than that which is called Lefortowsky, and two regiments of guards, who had only been at the two sieges of Azoph, who had never seen an action in the open field, and still less with regular troops. It is not surprising, therefore, that old exercised, and experienced troops should have had the advantage over such as ours. It is true, notwithstanding, that this victory caused us a sensible mortification, and made us despair of more favourable success in future; it was even regarded as a mark of the extreme wrath of God; but, in diving into the views of Heaven, one sees that they were rather favourable than otherwise to us; for, if we had then obtained a victory over the Swedes, being, as we were, so little instructed in the art of war, and of policy, into what an abyss might not this good fortune have sunk us! On the contrary, this success of the Swedes cost them very dear afterwards at Pultava, although they possessed so much skill and reputation, that the French called them the scourge of the Germans. We, after this disastrous check,—which has been a real good fortune for us—have been obliged to redouble our activity, and to make the utmost

efforts to supply, by our circumspection, the want of experience; and it is thus that the war has been continued, as we shall see in the course of this history *."

With such feelings it is the less surprising that he bore his ill success with calmness and resignation; so far was he from being dispirited, when first told of the decisive victory gained by the Swedes, that he showed a philosophic firmness which the intrepidity and valour of Charles XII. himself could not have surpassed. "I know very well," said he, "that the Swedes, will have the advantage of us for a considerable time; but they will teach us, at length, to beat them. His first object was to prevent Charles from following up the blow; and, for this purpose, he despatched forthwith the troops, which had rendezvoused at Novogorod, to Plescow, situated on the lake Peipus, by way of securing that frontier against any attempt that the enemy might make to invade the country. He then repaired to Moscow with his two regiments of guards, and issued immediate orders that a certain proportion of the bells of the churches and convents of all the cities in the empire, should be forthwith cast into cannon and mortars. This was effected in the course of the winter accordingly, and one hundred pieces of cannon for sieges, and one hundred and forty-two field-pieces, with twelve mortars and thirteen howitzers were ready to be sent off to Novogorod in the spring of 1701 †. He also caused six infantry regiments, of one thousand men each, to be raised,

* Journal de Pierre le Grand. † Ibid.

and several regiments of dragoons, which were to be trained and disciplined with as little delay as possible.

Notwithstanding the inveteracy of the clergy against the innovations of Peter, which they considered the cause of his defeat, and as a judgment of God, one bishop was found who undertook to compose a prayer, addressed not to the Deity, but to St. Nicholas, the patron of Muscovy, which was read in all the churches. In this prayer the bishop accuses the saint of having abandoned the Russians to the furious and terrible Swedes, who were denounced as infidels and sorcerers. This singular document is too illustrative of the ignorance and superstition of the Muscovites to be omitted. It is as follows :—

'O thou who art our perpetual comforter, in all our adversities, great Saint Nicholas! infinitely powerful, by what sin have we offended thee, in our sacrifices, genuflexions, reverence, and thanksgivings, that thou hast thus forsaken us? We have implored thy assistance against these terrible, insolent, enraged, dreadful, insuperable destroyers, when, like lions and bears, and other savage beasts, which have lost their young, they have attacked us, terrified, wounded, slain by thousands, us, who are thy people. But, as it is impossible this could have happened without witchcraft and enchantment, seeing the great care that we had taken to fortify ourselves in an inaccessible manner, for the defence and security of thy name; we beseech thee, O great Nicholas! to be our champion and standard-bearer, to be with us, as well in

peace as in war, in all our necessities, and in the time of our death; to protect us against this terrible and tyrannical crowd of sorcerers, and drive them far from our frontiers, with the reward which they deserve*."

The Tzar, however, disregarding both Saint Nicholas and the priests, pursued steadily the course he had marked out. He had an interview with King Augustus at Birzen, on the frontier of Courland, for the purpose of confirming that prince in his resolution of maintaining the war against Charles XII. and to prevail on the Polish diet to engage in the quarrel. However disposed Augustus might be to continue the war, he could not be unmindful that the king of Poland was but the head of the republic, and that it was necessary he should treat with his subjects. The Poles were in no haste to enter into the quarrel; they dreaded any infringement on their liberties by the armies of the Saxons, and the Russians being quartered in their country; and they dreaded, still more, the displeasure of Charles. The majority of the diet determined, therefore, not to support the views of Augustus, in whom Peter now discovered he had but a weak ally, and that he had to depend solely on his own resources. General Patkul, of whom more will be said hereafter, had been the life and soul of the conferences at Birzen, and he exerted all his zeal in procuring German officers, and in disciplining the raw recruits; he was, in fact, another Le Fort. He took care that all who entered the service, whether officers or men, should

* Nestesuranoi. Voltaire, &c.

be well provided with arms, clothes, and subsistence.

The Tzar next proceeded to the lake Peipus, on which, in the course of the year 1701, he had caused to be got ready, and fully equipped, a fleet of one hundred and fifty galleys, each manned with fifty men. He inspected, in his own person, the building, equipping, and manning of this flotilla, destined to prevent the Swedish vessels, on this side of the lake, from insulting the province of Novogorod. In like manner, he ordered up the seamen from the Don, to man his rising fleet, on the lake Ladoga. In the midst of all these preparations, he made frequent excursions to Moscow, to see that the progress of improvements and his new regulations were not neglected or infringed. "Princes," says Voltaire, "who have employed their peaceful days in public foundations, are mentioned in history with honour; but that Peter, just after the unfortunate battle of Narva, should undertake the junction of the Baltic, Caspian, and Euxine Seas, is what crowns him with more real glory than he could ever have derived from the most signal victory*."

It has always been a subject of surprise that, after the victory of Narva, when Charles might have carried every thing before him in Russia, he should have directed his sole attention to Poland, treating the former as if unworthy of his notice; while Peter was left at full liberty, not only to recruit and discipline a new army, but also to design and carry into execution many great and im-

* History of the Russian Empire, &c.

portant improvements: such as introducing, from Saxony, flocks of sheep, and shepherds to attend them, for the sake of their wool; erecting linen and paper manufactories; building hospitals; inviting from abroad braziers, blacksmiths, armourers, and other artizans of every description; and, in fact, cultivating, in the midst of war, all the arts of peace. But for pursuits of this kind, Charles XII. himself had no taste; he appeared not to bestow a thought either on the welfare of his own country, or on the proceedings of Peter, whom he left unmolested, and quite at his ease during the whole year 1702; having made up his mind not to quit Poland, until he had driven from the throne the newly-elected sovereign and ally of the Tzar, Augustus, the elector of Saxony.

The Russian army was, in the mean time, far from being idle; on the contrary, it was gaining experience and confidence by the frequent skirmishes the several detachments had with the Swedes, particularly in Ingria and Livonia. Peter himself was moving about in all directions; one week he was at Plescow, the next he made his appearance at Moscow, and the third at Archangel, to which place he had proceeded on a report that the Swedes were intending to destroy the small establishment which was kept up at that port. On coming thither he drew the plan of a new fortress, for its better security, to which he gave the name of the New Dwina, and of which he himself laid the first stone. His General Scherematof succeeded in capturing what is called a Swedish frigate, on the lake Peipus. He was also suc-

cessful against the Swedes in the neighbourhood of Dorpt, or Dorpat, on the frontiers of Livonia, in an action with Major-general Schlippenbach, in which the Russians took a great number of prisoners and some colours. On the 1st of January, 1702, this officer fell in with the main body of the enemy, near a village named Eresfort. "As our troops," says the Tzar, "were new, and but little exercised, and our artillery had not arrived, the enemy threw a great part of our men into confusion, and obliged them to fall back; but on being joined by our artillery, their retreat was stopped; our men being again formed in order of battle, attacked with so much vigour that, after an action of four hours, the Swedes were compelled to yield, to abandon their artillery, and to fly. The enemy lost in this action the greater part of his troops, as three thousand lay dead on the field of battle. Of our men about one thousand were killed *."

In consequence of this important success, General Scherematof was made field-marshal, and received the order of St. Andrew, which was carried to him by Menzikoff. Thanks were publicly returned to God for this victory, and salutes, and fireworks, and other rejoicings took place. It was on this occasion, that Peter observed, "Well, we have at last beaten the Swedes, when we were two to one against them; we shall, by and by, be able to face them man to man."

On the 17th of July, the marshal was again engaged with the enemy, near the village of Humolowa, where he attacked them in front and

* Journal de Pierre le Grand.

in flank, "and," says the Tzar, "with the assistance of God, we compelled them to fly from the field of battle; having not only retaken the artillery, the colours, and the equipage. which they had taken from us, but also killed so many of them, that the few remains of the cavalry were obliged to fly towards the city of Pernow. The marshal having left behind the infantry, pursued them with the regiments of dragoons; he overtook them a few miles from the city, and routed them afresh. On this occasion we took fifteen pieces of cannon, and sixteen colours, and a great number of prisoners. Our loss was ten officers, and about four hundred soldiers killed *."

After this second decisive action, Marshal Scherematof continued his march, driving from their posts the small parties of Swedes, and laying the whole country under contribution, till he arrived before Marienburgh, on the confines of Livonia and Ingria. This small town is situated on a lake, which it was necessary to cross on floating bridges, to enable the besiegers to take it by assault; but the enemy agreed to capitulate, on condition of letting the inhabitants leave the place, which was granted; and the major commanding, with two captains, came to the camp to give up the place, according to capitulation. In the mean time, a Captain Woolf, and an ensign of artillery, the latter dragging his wife by force, entered the powder magazine, and set fire to it, by which numbers, both of Russians and Swedes, were blown into the air. In consequence of this,

* Journal de Pierre le Grand.

the whole of the inhabitants, being very few, were made prisoners, and the town was utterly destroyed.

Among the prisoners, that were thus taken captive, was one so intimately connected with the future fortunes of the Tzar—one to whom he was so much indebted for his health and peace of mind, and, probably, for his life and throne, as to have entitled her to that esteem and gratitude which he owned, and never ceased to feel, to the end of his life. The officer before whom the prisoners of war were to file off, was General Bauer, a man of great mildness and humanity, who had risen from the ranks to his present station, He observed among the prisoners, who passed before him, a very young girl, with tears streaming down her cheeks, and apparently in the greatest distress. There was something in her countenance and manner, which made that kind of strong impression on him, as to create a desire to know her history ; and, with this view, he ordered her to be taken care of till he had time to question her. Her modest deportment, her great diffidence, and her whole demeanour pleased him. He assured her she had nothing to fear, as he would take care she should be well treated. Her story was simply this :—She was born at Ringen, a small village on the banks of a lake near Dorpt, in Livonia. Her mother had been a poor woman, supported chiefly by Count Rosen, an officer in the Swedish service, the owner of the village ; but she had lost her mother when she was three years old, and the count having died about the same time, she could give no further account of

what happened, unless that she was taken into the house of the clerk of the village. This parish clerk kept a school, and intended to instruct her with the rest of the children; but Doctor Gluck, the Lutheran minister of Marienburgh, happening one day to come to the village, and observing the child, took a great fancy to her, and on learning her history, asked the clerk, who was but a poor man, if he had any objection to part with her. In short, he took her home with him, and treated her like one of his own young family. Here she made herself useful, and soon became a great favourite. She employed herself in the usual kind of work required in a family. At first she knew no other language but Livonian, which is a dialect of the Sclavonian, but at M. Gluck's she learnt the German, of which she very soon became a perfect mistress.

As Martha, for so it appears Catharine was then called, advanced in years, her beauty attracted many admirers; and one in particular, a Livonian sergeant in the Swedish army, fell passionately in love with her; but, though the attachment was mutual, she refused to marry him unless he obtained the consent of M. Gluck. This worthy man, whose circumstances were but moderate, thought he could not do better, either for the young woman, or for himself, than to agree to the sergeant's proposal, more especially as his family was known to be respectable, that he had a small property of his own, and was in a fair way towards preferment, being a sober and steady man, and a favourite in his regiment. The marriage was performed by M. Gluck, and the following day Marienburgh surrendered, as we have seen, to the Russians.

It was when in extreme grief for the loss of her husband who, as he was never heard of afterwards, must be supposed to have perished on that day, that General Bauer saw her: he was moved with compassion, and at the same time, no doubt, with a stronger feeling; and smitten with her beauty, took her to his house, where he appointed her to superintend his domestic affairs; and in a little time it was supposed, though the general seems never to have admitted it, that she became his mistress. This, however, is by no means improbable. Bauer was an unmarried man, and there are trials and situations which the most exalted virtue may find it difficult to resist. Be that as it may, M. Wurmb, who was tutor in M. Gluck's family, assured M. Weber, the Hanoverian minister at Petersburg, that during her residence at Marienburgh, she was a pattern of virtue and good conduct; and while with the general, she was greatly beloved by all his domestics, over whom she was placed.

One day Menzikoff happened to call at the general's house, and seeing Martha, was struck with her beauty and manner, and, having learned her history, asked the general if he would part with her, as he was very much in want of such a person to superintend the female part of his establishment. The general would willingly have refused; but as he was indebted for his rise in some manner to the prince, and owed him, on that account, a debt of gratitude, he called the young woman before them, and asked her if she had any objection to enter the service of Prince Menzikoff, who would have it in his power to be

of more use to her than he could possibly be, and that he had too much regard for her future welfare to stand in the way of what was likely to lead to her advantage. Martha made a profound curtsey, and retired without speaking a word, and the next day saw her in the palace of Menzikoff. There can be little doubt in what capacity she lived with this splendid libertine *, with whom she continued till the year 1704, when, in the seventeenth year of her age, she became the mistress of Peter, and won so much upon his affections, that he first privately, and afterwards publicly, married her.

Such was the rise of this extraordinary woman, who, after the death of Peter, succeeded to the throne of Russia. "There have been instances," says Voltaire, "before this, of private persons being raised to the throne; nothing was more common in Russia, and in all the Asiatic kingdoms, than marriages between sovereigns and their subjects; but that a poor stranger, who had been discovered amidst the ruins of a plundered town, should become the absolute sovereign of that very empire into which she was led captive, is an incident, which fortune and merit have never before produced in the annals ofthe world."

The arms of the Tzar, in the course of this campaign of 1702, were equally successful in Ingria as in Livonia. His galleys, on the lake

* Gordon, who is not, however, good authority on this point, being then a prisoner at Stockholm, says, that Menzikoff took her home and presented her to his princess. He also mistakes Scherematof for Bauer, and Marienburgh for Dorpt.

Ladoga, drove those of the Swedes to take shelter on the opposite side of the lake. From the lower extremity of this fine sheet of water issues the river Neva, whose branches, now flowing through the noble city of Petersburg, which then had no existence, reunite and are discharged into the Baltic. The importance of such a communication could not pass unobserved by the Tzar. Near the exit of this river, on an island of the lake, was situated the strongly fortified town of Rotteburg, which Peter was determined to wrest, if possible, from the Swedes; and for this purpose the siege of it was ordered to be undertaken by the Field-Marshal Scherematoff. Peter himself, as captain of the Preobazinski guards, with the princes Repnin, Galitzin, and Menzikoff, the last then only a lieutenant, were present at the siege, which lasted from the 18th September to the 12th October, when three several breaches being made, the place was carried by assault. A prodigious quantity of stores and ammunition fell into the hands of the Russians. "The same day," says the Tzar, "the marshal and the generals went into the town, after returning thanks to God; and having fired three volleys of cannon and musketry, they changed the name of the fortress, and gave it that of Schlüsselbourg *: because," he adds, "it is by this *key* that the gates of the enemy's country are opened to us, and this name, by the grace of God, is effectually secured to it."

Honours, and promotions, and rewards, were largely distributed. Menzikoff, lieutenant of bombardiers, was appointed governor of Schlüssel-

* i. e. Key-town.

bourg. Prince Galitzin, lieutenant-colonel of the guards, was promoted to the rank of colonel; the rest of the officers were gratified in one way or another, mostly with gold medals; and rewards were also distributed to all the common soldiers; but Peter himself took no promotion, though he had been captain of a storming party, and actually mounted one of the breaches. On the 6th December he made his triumphal entry into Moscow, and the prisoners, their colours, their cannon, and twenty wagon-loads of ammunition and stores, taken from the enemy, were marched in the procession, passing through three triumphal arches. His majesty, on entering the city, was harangued by the clergy and the chief authorities, and greeted with the discharge of artillery, and the ringing of bells; and the day was celebrated with every demonstration of joy. The Tzar himself was known to have no taste for these kind of exhibitions, but he thought them necessary, not only to inspire his new troops with a noble emulation, but also to give confidence by his successes to his subjects, a large portion of whom, judging from former reverses, were averse from the war in which he had involved the country.

In the course of this year the Patriarch Adrian died; and as these dignitaries of the church had, at all times, not only interfered with the temporal concerns of the Tzars, but assumed a superior and independent authority, and even arrogated to themselves the power of life and death, Peter determined to abolish the office altogether, letting it be understood that *he* was to be considered as the head of the church; having profited, perhaps,

from the lessons he received from Bishop Burnet. At the same time he appointed the metropolitan of Rezan to take upon himself the chief administration of ecclesiastical affairs, until a regular synod should be established, which, however, did not take place till the year 1721. At that synod, when Peter was presiding, a petition was read from some of the superior clergy, which contained the names of several members of the synod, praying him to appoint a patriarch. The secretary having finished the reading, Peter rose up, struck his breast with great violence, and called out vehemently, "Here is your patriarch," and immediately left the meeting. The Tzar's private secretary, who was present, told Stæhlin that Peter smote his breast with one hand, and drew his hanger with the other, and, striking the table with the flat of it, called out, "Here is your patriarch*."

It was not consistent with the character of Peter to pay that homage to any one which, in his estimation, was due only to God and St. Nicholas; or to submit to walk on foot, in a procession, leading by the bridle the horse or the ass on which an insolent and arrogant priest was seated; or to suffer any individual, except himself, to pronounce sentence of death, or inflict the punishment of the rack or the wheel, as was done, and without appeal, by the ecclesiastical tribunal. The monks and the priests were of course dissatisfied with the loss of the patriarch. They libelled the Tzar, and ridiculed his innovations, through the very press which he had himself been the means of

* Stæhlin; authority, Great Chancellor Bestouchef and Secretary Tcherkassof.

introducing. One priest declared him to be Antichrist, as no evil being of less power could have dared to abolish the holy office; but another contended that the Tzar could not be Antichrist, because the number 666 was not in his name, neither had he the sign of the beast. Peter, as it would appear, paid very little attention to these idle disputes; though Voltaire, in his history of Charles the Twelfth, says, "the author of the libel was racked on the wheel, and the respondent made bishop of Rezan."

Abating the displeasure which the clergy felt at the abolition of the office of patriarch, the Tzar omitted nothing, during his short stay at Moscow, that he conceived might afford amusement to the people, and keep them in good humour; rightly judging this to be the readiest way to facilitate the progress of his new regulations. He ventured, however, on a bold experiment. By making their old customs appear ridiculous, he hoped to induce his subjects to think lightly of their loss. With this view he gave a grand entertainment, at which all the guests were ordered to be dressed in the ancient costume of Moscovy. At the same time one of his fools was to be married, by which he would have an opportunity of exhibiting to the guests how very absurd the ancient customs were on such occasions; one of which forbade any fire being lighted on a wedding-day, even in the depth of winter, which it now was, the warmth of the affection of the new-married couple being thought sufficient without any other fuel. He prohibited the use of wine to his guests, and made them drink mead and brandy; telling them, in a jocular man-

ner, "Your ancestors did so; and surely ancient customs are always the best to be observed." The report of this entertainment being spread over Moscow, gave great amusement to the people, who observed to one another, what a comical man their Tzar was.

Since Peter's return from his travels, he had not only become much more social, but had lost his former shyness and dislike to mix in large societies; he now visited, in a familiar way, the most respectable merchants' families, and explained to them his views of improving the trade of the country. One day, when dining with a foreign merchant, he was so much taken with the beauty and manners of his daughter, that he made proposals to the father that she should live at his court, on what terms is not mentioned. The story is romantic, but the truth of it well vouched. This virtuous young lady rejected, with indignation, the offer, but, dreading what might be the effect of a refusal on the all-powerful autocrat, she took the resolution of leaving Moscow that very night, without communicating her design even to her parents. Having provided herself with a little money, she repaired on foot to a small village, several miles off, where her old nurse lived, with her husband and their daughter—told her story, and entreated them to conceal her from any pursuit that might be made. There was a wood near the village, into which she insisted on proceeding that very night. The husband being a wood-cutter by trade, conducted her to a little dry island in the midst of a morass, where he constructed a log-hut for her habitation, and here she remained for more

than twelve months, her nurse providing little necessaries for her support, which were carefully conveyed to her by one of the three, and either the mother or the daughter attending her by night.

The Tzar calling at the house of the merchant, the next day, and learning what had happened, flew into a great rage, and threatened him with the effect of his utmost displeasure, if his daughter was not immediately produced. Both father and mother protested most solemnly, with tears of grief for the loss of their child, that they were alike ignorant as innocent of what had occurred, and expressed their fears, as nothing belonging to her was missing, that some dreadful disaster had befallen her. The Tzar was at length satisfied; rewards were publicly advertised for her recovery, but to no purpose; and the parents and relations went into mourning, considering she was no more.

It happened that a colonel in the army was shooting in the wood where the young lady was concealed, and, following his game, came upon the hut, and saw a young and beautiful girl in a peasant's dress. He soon discovered by her conversation that she was not the person she appeared to be, and a suspicion crossed his mind that she might be the lost lady, whose disappearance had made so great a noise. In the utmost confusion and distress, she entreated him, on her knees, not to betray her. He told her that all danger was now past, the Tzar was then otherwise engaged, and that she might with safety discover herself, at least, to her parents. It will readily be supposed that an interesting adventure of this kind, between two young persons, laid the seeds of a mutual

attachment. The colonel proceeded to make the happy discovery to her friends, who, however, had still their apprehensions of the Tzar's anger. The colonel proposed to lay the whole story before Catharine, whose influence over Peter was already known; he waited on her, and she agreed to introduce him, the following morning, to the Tzar; in the meantime, she put him in possession of her unfortunate case, and of the sufferings she must have undergone in so dismal a place. The Tzar showed a great deal of contrition, and declared himself ready to make all the amends in his power. Catharine, who probably was better acquainted with human nature than the Tzar, suggested, that the best amends his Majesty could make, was to give the lady a handsome fortune and the colonel for a husband. Peter at once agreed, and took upon himself the direction and expense of the marriage, and gave away the bride, saying, he was happy to present him with one of the most virtuous of women, which he accompanied with a present, besides settling on her a pension of three thousand rubles a year. Captain Bruce says, "*I had this her story from her own mouth**."

It is for this reason, namely, that of its being well authenticated, and as conveying a trait of Peter's character, that it is here introduced. Bruce also gives an account of another disappointment sustained by the Tzar, in the loss of a young lady, of whom he became enamoured. It happened soon after his divorce from Atokesa. "One Miss Mons," he says, "a very beautiful young lady,

* Mem. of P. H. Bruce, Esq.

born at Moscow of foreign parents, was much in favour with the Tzar; but when he was abroad, Mr. Keyserling, then residing at Moscow as envoy from the king of Prussia, paid his addresses to and married her. When the Tzar returned, he was so much offended at Keyserling, that he ordered him to leave Moscow, which occasioned his immediate recal by the king his master, who sent another in his room." Bruce has probably mistaken the situation of Mademoiselle Mons, or Moens, whose intimacy with the Tzar was of a very different description. She was avowedly his mistress, and is mentioned as such by various authors, and, among others, by an English lady, wife of the resident at Moscow in the time of Peter the Great. Mrs. Vigors, in one of her letters to a friend in England, thus relates the circumstance which dissolved the connexion.

" I have been visited by several of Mr. W—'s* old acquaintance, one of whom was a courtier in your hero's time. She is a sensible woman, and entertains me with many of his private adventures. The following one I will relate, though long, as I think it shows he was not so savage as some have represented him. He had a violent passion for an officer's daughter named Munce (Moens), and used more assiduous means to gain her than monarchs generally are forced to; at last she yielded and became his public mistress, and for many years he loved her with a fondness rarely found. One fatal day he went to see a castle he had built in the sea, attended by his own and foreign ministers. At their return, the Polish

* Mr. Ward, her former husband.

minister, by some accident, fell over the drawbridge and was drowned, notwithstanding all endeavours to save him. The Emperor ordered all the papers in his pockets to be taken out and sealed up, before all the company. On searching his pockets, a picture dropped, which the Emperor took up, and, judge his surprise, when he found it was the portrait of the lady. In a sudden gust of passion he tore open some of the papers, and found several letters from her to the deceased in the tenderest style. He left the company that instant, came alone to the apartment of my informant, and ordered her to send for the lady thither: when she entered, he locked the door on them three, and asked her how she came to write to such a person? She denied she had; he then produced the picture and letters, and when he told her of his death, she burst into tears, while he reproached her with ingratitude in such a storm of passion, that my author expected to see her murdered; but on a sudden he also melted into tears, and said he forgave her, since he so severely felt how impossible it was to conquer inclination; 'for,' he added, 'notwithstanding you have returned my fondness with falsehood, I find I cannot hate you, though I do myself for the meanness of spirit I am guilty of; but it would be quite despicable in me to continue to live with you; therefore begone, while I can keep my passion within the bounds of humanity. You shall never want, but I will never see you more.' He kept his word, and soon after married her to one who had an employment at a distance, and was always kind to them in point of fortune*."

* Letters from a lady who resided some years in Russia.

Mrs. Vigors is right. Peter was not such a "savage as some have represented him." From the silence of his biographers, it may be inferred that this was the last of his youthful indiscretions, as regards the female sex, for had more existed, they would have been blazoned forth in every variety of shape; the whole course of his life being minutely watched by the foreign residents, their secretaries and clerks, and reported to their employers—

> "—— —— all his faults observed,
> Set in a note-book, learned and conned by rote."

It seems, indeed, to have been the general belief, that his attachment to the fair sex was henceforward confined solely to Catharine, whose good conduct, affection, and unremitting attention, fully entitled her to his undivided confidence, love, and esteem.

CHAPTER VII.

Continued Successes over the Swedes—Peter lays the Foundation of St. Petersburg—His Saxon Ally deprived of the Crown of Poland—Takes Dorpt, and Narva, and Mittau—Augustus makes Peace with Charles—Disgraceful Conduct of the former—Seizure and inhuman Death of Patkul—Masterly Manœuvre of Peter—Position of the Russian and Swedish Armies.

The presence of the Tzar was soon deemed necessary on the north-eastern frontier of Sweden. He first hastened to Olonetz, where he had established a dock-yard, and a manufactory of small arms. This place, situated on the eastern shore of Ladoga, was a spot of great importance for his future operations in that quarter. Near this lake, and not far from the Neva, was situated another important fortress, held by the Swedes, to which he laid siege both by land and water; and it surrendered to Scherematof immediately after the capture of two Swedish vessels, that should have come to its relief, but which were both taken by the Tzar in person, who had assumed the command of the boats on the lake. On this occasion, as captain of bombardiers, he received the Order of St. Andrew as a reward for his gallant conduct. In his journal he modestly observes, "On the 30th May, we returned thanks to God for this naval victory, being the first; and, after this, those who had held com-

mands on this service, namely, the captain of bombardiers, and the Lieutenant Menzikoff, received the Order of St. Andrew, conferred on them by the Admiral Count de Golownin, the most ancient knight of that Order *."

It was the great importance which the Tzar attached to the expulsion of the enemy from the two shores of the Neva, and the occupation or destruction of all the Swedish posts which they held in Carelia and Ingria, that had hastened his departure from Moscow. In the meantime, Menzikoff had not been idle. Having proceeded to the mouth of the Neva, he obtained some success over the Swedish gun-boats that were hovering in that quarter; at the same time Peter advanced against a Swedish fortress, named Nianshantz, or, as he calls it, Kantzi, on the Carelian side of the Neva, near to the spot where Petersburg now stands. The Tzar, having made himself master of this fortress, called a council of war, in order to have its opinion, before he determined, whether they should strengthen the fortifications of this new conquest, or look out for another position, more spacious and less distant from the sea; the latter idea was adopted, and, after some days, they fixed upon a spot on an island near the mouth of the Neva, called *Lust-Eland*, or Pleasure-island, where, on the 16th May, they laid the foundation of a new fortress. Here, in fact, the Neva divided itself into four or five branches, forming a flat delta of islands, covered with brushwood and swamps, on which were a few miserable

* Journal de Pierre le Grand.

huts of some poor fishermen. The fortress thus founded was named St. Petersburg; and from this beginning has risen up, in the course of a hundred and thirty years, one of the most magnificent cities in the world.

A few months after this, Menzikoff was sent down to the mouth of the river, to fix upon a spot on which to erect a fortress for the protection of the entrance. A low sandy island, close to that called Retesari, which commanded the deep and narrow channel of the Neva, appeared to him in every respect suitable for the purpose; and his Majesty, having examined and approved the position, named a day to go down and lay the foundation of a fort, which should command and protect the channel, and to which he gave the name of Cronslot, and the town and buildings, which subsequently arose on the adjacent island, and, indeed, the first fortress, received the name they now bear of Cronstadt. The model of the fortress was made by the Tzar himself, in wood, and he left Menzikoff to carry it into execution. He then returned to superintend the works carrying on at his projected new city of Petersburg, taking up his lodging in a small wooden house, which he caused to be erected for himself, and which is still preserved by a surrounding wall, as a memorial of this extraordinary man.

In erecting the fortress of Petersburg, he availed himself of the ruins of the works at Nianshantz, which served for the foundation stones. This citadel was situated nearly about the centre of the intended city, and occupied the spot which

is now the Academy of Sciences. The command of it was given to Vassali Demetrievitz, and hence it took, and still retains, the name of *Vassali na Ostrof*—"Vassali upon the island." The whole surrounding country was a morass, in which not a stone of any description could be found,—the people employed had little or no experience,—according to Captain Perry, the labourers were not furnished with the necessary tools, such as pickaxes, spades, shovels, planks and the like.—"Notwithstanding which," the same author observes, "the work went on with such expedition, that it was surprising to see the fortress raised within less than five months, though the earth, which is very scarce thereabouts, was, for the greater part, carried by the labourers in the skirts of their clothes, and in bags made of rags and old mats, the use of wheelbarrows being then unknown to them *." Under such untoward circumstances, in such a country, and amidst such difficulties, it is indeed surprising that a town should have arisen, in the course of a twelvemonth, said, then, to contain houses and huts, of one description or another, amounting to the number of thirty thousand †.

Peter, however, was a man not to be diverted from his purpose by difficulties; nor was he deterred from the attempt to make up, by sheer human labour, what might be wanting in skill and implements. For this purpose he collected together many thousand persons, from all parts of the empire,—Russians, Cossacks, Tartars, Calmucks,

* Perry. † Mottley. Nestesuranoi.

Finlanders, and Ingrians;—these people he employed in deepening the channels of the several branches, digging canals, and heaping up the earth, in order to raise the general level of the islands, which were so low as to be frequently overflowed. This severe labour, without shelter from the inclemency of the weather, in a climate of sixty degrees of latitude, with scanty fare of the worst kind, and frequently without any for a day or two together, caused such a mortality among them that, it is asserted, not less than a hundred thousand men perished in the course of the first year.

Though Peter, as has been seen, had no great affection for the priesthood, he always paid a high regard to religious duties, and constantly attended divine service, wherever he was resident and the means were afforded, without regarding what the particular tenets of the community were. One of the first buildings, after the citadel, was a church; and he ordered a proper number of priests to be sent from Moscow, to perform the duties of their office. He directed, also, several merchants and tradespeople to repair to his new city, and exercise there their several trades and professions. The next public building erected, was a large hotel for the accommodation of the foreign ministers; and, as Menzikoff undertook the management of the Tzar's public entertainments, a large house was among the first to be constructed, to enable him to receive his sovereign's guests. In the meantime, the officers and private individuals were engaged in erecting houses, shops, and warehouses, all of wood, so that Petersburg soon exhibited the appearance of a large and respectable town.

Matters, however, did not go on smoothly. Those who had been forced to a residence among the swampy islands of the Neva, as well as the numerous workmen, who had suffered dreadfully from disease and privations of every kind, at length became clamorous, gave vent to their murmurings, and a general dissatisfaction manifested itself in a singular manner. Peter was absent in the neighbourhood of Ladoga, having left Count Golofkin to superintend the works. One day the people set off in crowds to the church. The count repaired thither, but the crowd was so dense that he was obliged to return. He was told that the image of the blessed Virgin had shed tears, to show the people her affliction for their sufferings, and at her being obliged to remain and witness them in that inhospitable part of the country. With such an omen before their eyes, they stated their conviction that some dreadful convulsion threatened the new establishment. Golofkin thought this story, ridiculous as it was, of sufficient importance to authorise him to send off an express for the Tzar, who made his appearance the following day; proceeded immediately to the church; summoned the people to attend; and ordered the priests to show him the miraculous signs exhibited by the holy Virgin. Having examined it attentively, and perceiving something oozing out of the eyes, he ordered one of the priests to take down the image; when, stripping off the covering behind, he discovered a small cavity, close to the eyes, in which was deposited a little oil, that gradually oozed out, and trickled down her cheeks; and, having exposed this piece

of priestly imposture to the public, he ordered the image to be taken to his house, telling the people he meant to deposit it in his cabinet of curiosities*. Another account says, the heads of the saints were, sometimes, made hollow, to hold water, in which, when it was necessary to make them weep, two or three little fishes were put, whose motions caused the water to overflow through the eyes.

It may well be supposed that the intention of building a second capital, and of forcing the inhabitants of the old one to migrate to the bleak regions of the north, met with great opposition from the boyars and superior classes; and, in fact, nothing short of despotic authority could have established Petersburg as the new residence of the Tzars. But Peter, more enlightened than his subjects, was fully aware of the importance of the situation. As a modern writer justly observes, "The internal improvement of the Russian empire, the great object of Peter's reign, was considerably advanced by approaching the capital to the more civilised parts of Europe: by this means he drew the nobility from their rude magnificence and feudal dignity at Moscow, to a more immediate dependence on the sovereign, to more polished manners, to a greater degree of social intercourse. Nor did any other cause, perhaps, so much tend to promote his plans for the civilisation of his subjects, as the removal of the imperial seat from the inland provinces to the gulf of Finland†."

The Tzar had, evidently, and indeed he avowed

* Stæhlin; authority, M. Corruedon, Intendant of the Court.

† Coxe's Travels in Russia.

it, Amsterdam in his eye, when he planned and marked out St. Petersburg. The wharfs of the river, the canals, the bridges, the straight-lined streets, planted with trees, were all after the Dutch model. He had taken with him, from Voronitz and other places, several Dutch architects, ship-builders, masons, and artisans well versed in securing foundations on swampy ground, similar to that on which Amsterdam is built; in short, the earliest part of the city, which stands on the Vassali Ostrof, is entirely after the Dutch taste; and to a small island, on which vast quantities of timber is usually collected and stowed, he gave the name of New Holland.

Five months had scarcely elapsed from laying the first stone of St. Petersburg, when a report was brought to the Tzar, that a large ship, under Dutch colours, was standing into the river. It may be supposed that this was a joyful piece of intelligence for the founder. It was nothing short of realising the wish, nearest his heart, to open the Baltic for the nations of Europe to trade with his dominions; it constituted them his neighbours; and he at once anticipated the day when his ships would also float on his own waters, would beat the Swedish navy, and drive them from a sea on which they had long rode triumphant with undivided sway. When Peter was employed in building his fleet at Voronitz, Patrick Gordon one day asked him, "Of what use do you expect all the vessels you are building to be, seeing you have no sea-ports?" "My vessels shall make ports for themselves," replied Peter, in a determined tone; a declaration which was now on the eve of being accomplished.

No sooner was the communication made, than the Tzar, with his usual rapidity, set off to meet this welcome stranger. The skipper was invited to the house of Menzikoff; he sat down at table; and, to his great astonishment, found that he was placed next the Tzar, and had actually been served by him. But not less astonished and delighted was Peter, on learning that the ship belonged to, and had been freighted by, his old Zaandam friend, with whom he had resided, Cornelius Calf. Permission was immediately given to the skipper to land his cargo, consisting of salt, wine, and other articles of provisions, free of all duties. Nothing could be more acceptable to the inhabitants of the new city than this cargo, the whole of which was purchased by Peter Menzikoff, and the several officers; so that *Auke Wybes*, the skipper, made a most profitable adventure. On his departure he received a present of five hundred ducats, and each man of the crew one hundred rix dollars, as a premium for the first ship that had entered the port of St. Petersburg. In the same year another Dutch ship arrived, with a cargo of hams, cheese, butter, gin, &c., and received the same premium; and the third was given to an English ship, which entered the port in the first year of the building of the city *.

While Peter was thus busily employed in creating a new capital, the king of Sweden was making his way with the diet of Poland, and endeavouring to prevail on them to dethrone Augustus. He was fully aware of the Tzar's proceedings, and of the rapid progress that he was making in

* Scheltema's Russia and Netherlands.

building a city on the banks of the Neva. But when this was once mentioned to Charles, he is reported to have said, " Let him amuse himself as he thinks fit in building this city, I shall soon find time to take it from him, and to put his wooden houses into a blaze." As to Augustus, he had lost entirely the affections of the Poles; so that the cardinal primate, who had long flattered and deceived him, at last threw off the mask, and declared, at an assembly held at Warsaw, the 14th of February, 1704, that Augustus, Elector of Saxony, was incapable of any longer wearing the crown of Poland. It was, therefore, agreed that the throne was vacant, and that a new election must be made. The Tzar addressed an indignant letter to the cardinal-primate, and to the " most illustrious, generous, and magnificent lords," which, however, produced no effect on the confederated nobility.

They proceeded to elect Prince James Sobiesky, recommended by the king of Sweden ; but intelligence was just then brought from his brother Alexander, stating, that, as his brothers James and Constantine were hunting near Breslaw, a party of about thirty horse, sent by Augustus for the purpose, had seized and forcibly carried them off to Leipsic, where they were kept in close confinement. Charles then proposed Alexander for the crown, which his father had worn before him, but he absolutely refused to accept it while his elder brother was alive. The king of Sweden next named Stanislaus Lecsinsky, a young nobleman endowed with great virtues and accomplishments, who was then, by the voice of the diet, declared king of Poland, and grand duke of Lithuania.

Augustus having heard of the election of Stanislaus, assembled a council at Sendomir, and there caused him to be declared a rebel and a traitor. But while the elector of Saxony was abusing his successful rival, in idle declamations, Charles was everywhere routing his Saxon troops. Thus circumstanced, the Tzar had not much hope of assistance from the deposed monarch. He himself was, however, growing every day more formidable; his troops were now in a high state of discipline, and fit to meet the Swedes man to man; his officers were well trained in their military duties; he had several fine regiments of cavalry, good engineers, and a serviceable artillery; and such was now the strength of his army, that, in virtue of a treaty he had made with Augustus, he was able to send him a reinforcement of twelve thousand men into Lithuania, to support him in that province, which had, as yet, declared for neither party. In the mean time the Tzar disposed his forces, in the spring of 1704, into two divisions: the one, under Field-marshal Scherematof, he destined to lay siege to Dorpt; the other, under his immediate orders, to proceed to the attack of Narva, where he had formerly sustained so destructive a defeat.

To besiege Dorpt, it was necessary to be master of the navigation of the lake Peipus. For this purpose, a flotilla was placed at the mouth of the Embach, and the infantry, with some field pieces, lined the banks. The Swedish squadron advanced down the river, to attack the Russian flotilla; a battle ensued, the result of which was the capture or destruction of all the Swedish vessels. The vessel of the commander, Loscher, was blown up,

and the victory was so complete, that the Russians sat down, without molestation, before Dorpt. The brave commandant of this place held out for more than six weeks, when a breach was made, and one thousand men were prepared for the assault. A great slaughter ensued; and the commandant, to prevent the remainder of the garrison being put to the sword, proposed, and was granted, an honourable capitulation. Though Peter had assisted in the siege of this place, and was constantly passing to and from Narva, the siege of the latter was under his immediate direction, and matters were now ready for an assault. It was necessary, in the first place, to get possession of three bastions, which bore the renowned names of *Victory*, *Honour*, and *Glory*. The Tzar carried all three, with sword in hand; the besiegers rushed forward into the town, and fell immediately to plunder. The most horrid barbarities ensued, and all those outrages against decency and humanity, which are but too common on the sacking of a town, and which both Russians and Swedes were in the habit of practising to the greatest excess, were committed in this unfortunate place. But Peter, barbarian as he has been supposed, on seeing his men intent on slaughter and pillage, ran from place to place to stay their fury, rescuing women and children from the hands of a savage soldiery, and slaying, without compunction, several of the barbarous brutes who would not listen to his orders. He then proceeded to the Hotel de Ville, where great numbers of the unfortunate citizens had taken refuge; he there threw down his sword, reeking with blood, upon the table, saying, "My sword is

not stained with the blood of the inhabitants of this city, but with that of my own soldiers, which I have not hesitated to spill to save your lives."

Thus, with the acquisition of Dorpt and Narva, the year 1704 saw Peter in possession of all Ingria, the government of which he conferred on his favourite, Menzikoff, creating him, at the same time, a prince of the empire and major-general in the army. "The pride and prejudice of other countries," says Voltaire, "might find fault with a sovereign for raising a pastry-cook's boy to the post of general, and governor, and to princely dignity; but Peter had accustomed his subjects not to be surprised at seeing him prefer men of abilities to persons who had nothing to recommend them but their high birth." Menzikoff had, unquestionably, very splendid abilities, though Gordon will not allow of his military talent. While in the Tzar's family, he had made himself perfect in several languages; he became an officer, at least, of considerable talent, and was of great assistance to his master both in the cabinet and the field; and, by his insinuating manners, and lively good humour, he gained over a great many of the nobles, who for some time had shown a decided hostility both to him and to the innovations of his master. Such a man was deemed most fit to govern and protect the important province, which opened to Russia a lucrative commerce, and speedy intercourse with the rest of Europe. Some few demonstrations had been made, in the course of the year, on the part of the Swedes, to interrupt the operations on the Neva, but they all failed. The only formidable attempt occurred when Peter was in Poland, in

June 1705. A Swedish squadron of twenty-two ships of war, with a number of transports, landed a numerous body of men on the island of Kitin, when the Russian troops, who had laid themselves down flat on the ground, suddenly started up, and falling on the Swedes unawares, obliged them to retreat, in the utmost confusion, to their ships, abandoning their dead, and leaving behind three hundred prisoners.

Peter, therefore, deeming himself secure in this quarter, directed a more particular attention to the proceedings of Charles XII. in Poland. He first made an offer to the dethroned king, Augustus, to supply him with a fresh body of troops, in addition to the twelve thousand men which he had already sent him; and General Repnin was accordingly ordered to march from the frontiers of Lithuania with six thousand horse and six thousand foot. This being done, after first paying a visit to Voronitz, to be present at the launching of the first ship of eighty guns, built from a draught of his own, Peter hastened to join the confederated army in Poland, in order to open the first campaign of the year 1705, in support of his old ally Augustus. He proceeded to Vilna, in Lithuania, while Marshal Scherematof was advancing upon Mittau, the capital of Courland. In his way he fell in with the Swedish general Lewenhaupt, at a place called Gemauers, where an obstinate battle was fought, in which the Russians were defeated, with the loss of five to six thousand men, and the field-marshal was wounded; but the victory was dearly purchased by the Swedes, who had two generals and several other officers killed, and two

thousand men left on the field. Lewenhaupt, in his report of this battle to the king of Sweden, observes, that the Russians had throughout behaved like brave soldiers.

Notwithstanding this check, Peter ordered his army to march into Courland. General Repnin laid siege to the citadel at Mittau, after making himself master of the town; and, after a short resistance, it surrendered by capitulation; but while this was carrying into execution, it was discovered by Repnin that the Swedes had pillaged the palace and archives of the dukes of Courland, and had even entered the vaults, where their dead were deposited, to rob their bodies of certain jewels which they had on their necks and fingers. To the honour of the Russian soldiers, appointed to guard the vaults of the castle, on finding the bodies dragged from the tombs, and stripped of their ornaments, they refused to take charge until a Swedish colonel had examined the place, and given them a certificate that his own countrymen had committed this sacrilege*.

The Tzar being now in possession of the greatest part of Courland, and Charles too much occupied in crowning the successor of the king whom he had been the means of dethroning, his Majesty determined to pass the remainder of the winter at Moscow, in order, by his presence, to give vigour to his new regulations, and for the encouragement of his subjects in the arts and sciences.

Scarcely had the year 1706 commenced, when intelligence was brought to Moscow that Charles

* Nestesuranoi. Voltaire. Mottley. Journal de Pierre le Grand.

XII. was advancing towards Grodno, in order to attack the Russian and Saxon forces; and that Augustus had been obliged to retire precipitately towards Saxony, with four regiments of Russian dragoons. The Tzar immediately set out to his relief, but found all the avenues to Grodno occupied by the Swedish troops, and his own dispersed. Peter was not to be dispirited by a check of this kind: he immediately set about collecting his scattered forces; and General Schullemberg, in whom Augustus had placed his last hopes, was in full march with twelve thousand Saxons and six thousand Russians, a part of those which the Tzar had furnished to the deposed sovereign. The Swedish Field-Marshal Renschild interrupted his march with a body of ten thousand Swedes. The two armies met near the little town of Frauenstadt; a battle ensued, and the Saxons were defeated with great slaughter; a few battalions only escaped, and almost every man was wounded. The Tzar, in his manifesto, says, that many of his troops, both Russians and Cossacks, were slaughtered in cold blood, three days after the battle. It is stated by Voltaire, in his History of Charles XII., and repeated in that of Peter I., that there was a French regiment in the Saxon army, who had been taken prisoners in the celebrated battle of Hochstedt, and they had the care of the artillery; that, dissatisfied with their Saxon masters, and admirers of the heroism of Charles XII., laid down their arms as soon as they saw the enemy. The Journal of Peter does not mention this circumstance; he merely states that the cavalry attacked the enemy with great impetuosity, and drove the infantry into

a wood, but that the artillery had not been brought up.

Voltaire further states, on the authority of King Stanislaus himself, that such were the barbarous cruelties practised by officers of both armies, that in one of the skirmishes, which frequently happened in Poland, a Russian officer, who had been his friend, came after the defeat of the corps under his command, to place himself under his protection; and that Steinbok, the Swedish general, shot him dead with a pistol, while he held him in his arms.

Augustus had got together an army of twenty thousand men, with which he was prevailed on by General Patkul, ambassador from the Tzar, to march into Poland to join the forces of Peter. These two sovereigns met a second time at Grodno, where Augustus instituted the order of the White Eagle, with which he invested the Tzar, and some of the Russian generals, as well as several of the grandees of Poland; and to complete the farce, as M. Fontenelle is pleased to call it, he gave the commission of colonel to the Tzar and Menzikoff. Ridiculous as it might appear, the farce had both point and plot in it. In fact it was the renovation of an ancient Polish order, created many centuries ago, and the object of restoring it was to conciliate the Polish prelates and nobles, and, by their means, to regain the crown, which Peter never despaired of, and at last accomplished for his wavering ally.

Peter being suddenly called away to quell a rebellion, that had broken out in Astracan, left his army, amounting to twenty thousand men, with

his faithful ally, commanded by Menzikoff. Charles XII. was at this time overrunning Saxony, and had proceeded to the very heart of the electorate of Augustus. Whether it was the fear that Charles would ruin his country, or admiration of his glorious career, like that of the French regiment which laid down their arms, or some jealousy created by the grandees of Lithuania, or the operation of all these, Augustus determined to seek for peace, cost what it might; and, for this purpose, sent Imhoff and Pfingsten, secretly and confidentially, with full powers, to treat with Charles. At the same time, he sent an order for the arrest of Patkul, who was then at Dresden, as the Tzar's ambassador, and threw him into prison. The two plenipotentiaries went privately by night to the camp of Charles XII. at Alt-Ranstadt, and delivered their credentials to him; he desired them to wait, retired to his closet, and in a short time returned with a paper containing four articles, in which it was declared, in writing, he would not make the least alteration. *First.* That King Augustus renounce for ever the crown of Poland, and that he acknowledge Stanislaus as lawful king. *Second.* That he renounce all treaties he may have made with the Tzar of Moscovy. *Third.* That he send back immediately the two Sobieskis and all the Swedish prisoners. *Fourth.* That all Swedish deserters, and especially John Patkul, be delivered up.

Just at this moment, and while the plenipotentiaries were negociating this shameful treaty at Alt-Ranstadt, Prince Menzikoff, generalissimo of the Russian army, joined the forces of Augustus,

near Calise, with thirty thousand men. The deposed monarch was in the utmost state of confusion, and under dreadful apprehension lest Menzikoff should discover his defection; but what added greatly to his chagrin, was the sudden appearance of ten thousand Swedes under the command of General Meyerfeldt. What was Augustus to do in this awkward dilemma in which he was thus placed? He did the very thing that he ought not to have done—he sent a confidential officer to acquaint Meyerfeldt with the negociation that was going on; but that general, as might have been foreseen, treated the message with contempt, as "a weak invention of the enemy;" and immediately offered battle, which, whether won or lost, would be alike fatal to Augustus. The Russians obtained a complete victory; the Swedes having lost about three thousand men killed, and Meyerfeldt, and several officers of distinction, and four thousand men, taken prisoners. The victors entered Warsaw in triumph, and there Pfingsten presented Augustus with the treaty of peace he had just concluded, which deprived him for ever of his crown.

Augustus had previously written, from the field of battle, a letter to his plenipotentiaries, more disgraceful even than the treaty itself, which was intended to be shown to Charles, and in which he begged pardon for having obtained a victory, protesting that the battle was fought against his will; that the Russians had obliged him to it; that he had intended to abandon Menzikoff; that Meyerfeldt ought to have beaten him, had he made a proper use of the opportunity; that he would deliver up all the Swedish prisoners, or break with the

Russians; in short, that he would give the king of Sweden all proper satisfaction, for having dared to beat his troops*.

But the humiliation of Augustus was not yet complete. Leaving Menzikoff with the victorious army, he proceeded to Saxony to place himself at the discretion of the Swedish king. Charles was not gifted with the milk of human kindness; the great features of his character were obstinacy, severity, and cruelty. Augustus found him determined to exact compliance with every article of the treaty; and as a further punishment for having dared to give battle to his general at Calishe, he forced upon him the ungrateful and humiliating task of writing a congratulatory letter to Stanislaus, on his accession to the crown of Poland. Nor was this all; he was peremptorily ordered to give up the unfortunate Patkul to the vengeance of the king of Sweden. Never was a sovereign prince placed in a more embarrassing situation, owing to his vacillating conduct; for while Charles was heaping upon him all manner of indignities, the Tzar was loading him with bitter reproaches, and loudly demanded from him the restoration of his ambassador; but Charles threatened what terrible things he would do, if he was not delivered up to him according to the treaty of Alt-Ranstadt.

The melancholy story of this unfortunate Livonian has left a stain on the character of Charles XII., that must for ever cast a cloud over his stern virtues and heroic actions. Charles XII. had exercised great severity against, and abridged

* Voltaire.

many of the privileges of, the Livonians. Patkul, with six of his countrymen, were deputed by the nobility of Livonia to carry their grievances to the king, whom he addressed with great force and eloquence. Charles, so far from being displeased, laid his hand on Patkul's shoulder, and told him, "He had spoken for his country like a brave man, and that he loved him for it;" yet within a few days after this, the same Charles read his public accusation as a traitor. Patkul made his escape to Augustus, from whose service he passed into that of the Tzar till he was thrown into confinement in the castle of Konigstein. It is said that on the threats of Peter, Augustus, in order to pacify the Tzar and evade the wrath of Charles, secretly consented to the prisoner's escape, but that Patkul refused to pay to the mercenary governor the sum he demanded for his liberty, relying on the law of nations, and, as he supposed, the friendly intentions of Augustus. In the meantime a party of Swedes came up and forced the victim out of the hands of his gaoler. He was carried to head-quarters at Alt-Ranstadt, and kept in chains for three months before his execution.

It is said that Charles wrote out his sentence with his own hand, which was, to be broken alive on the wheel, and quartered. He was at that time under an engagement of marriage to a Saxon lady of great beauty, birth and merit; he desired the chaplain to wait on her, comfort her, and assure her, that he died full of the tenderest love and affection for her. When led to the place of execution, a Swedish officer read aloud from a

paper as follows: "This is to declare that the express order of his majesty, our most merciful lord, is, that this man, who is a traitor to his country, be broke upon the wheel and quartered, for the reparation of his crimes, and for an example to others; that every one may take care of treason, and faithfully serve his king." At the words, "most merciful lord," Patkul cried out, "What mercy?"—and at those of "traitor to his country," "Alas!" he said, "I have served it too well." He received sixteen blows, and endured a long and dreadful torture. Thus died the unhappy John Renold Patkul, ambassador and general of the Tzar of Russia *.

Voltaire's observations on this murder are not more forcible than just. "There is not a civilian," he says, "in Europe, nay, there is not a slave, but must shudder with horror at this barbarous act of injustice. The first crime of this unfortunate man was his having made a humble representation of the rights and privileges of his country, at the head of six Livonian gentlemen, who had been deputed by the whole state; he was condemned for fulfilling the first of duties, that of serving his country according to her laws. So unjust a sentence fully restored him to a right, which all mankind derive from nature,—that of choosing his country. As he was the ambassador of one of the greatest monarchs in the whole world, his person ought to have been sacred. The laws of nature and nations were violated on this occasion, by the law of the longest sword. The splendour of high achievements used formerly to cover such cruel-

* Harleian Miscellany. Voltaire. John Mottley, &c.

ties; but now they are an indelible stain to military glory *."

The Tzar was highly incensed at this barbarous outrage on the part of the king of Sweden. He wrote letters to several of the potentates of Europe, complaining of the cowardice and treachery, as he deemed it to be, of his ally Augustus, and of the violation of the law of nations by Charles XII. Some of his councillors proposed to him, while in this state of exasperation, that he should retaliate on the Swedish officers, who were prisoners at Moscow; but Peter rebuked them severely for such a suggestion. If Charles was so dead to the feelings of humanity, and to his own honour and reputation, that nothing but glutting his revenge in blood would satisfy him, Peter, with all his severity, and irascible temper, was seldom, if ever, actuated in his punishments by feelings of that character. The revenge which he resolved to take on the present occasion, was of a nobler and more honourable nature. He determined to follow up, from that moment, the project agreed upon at Grodno by Augustus and himself; to use every means in his power to defeat the views of Charles on Poland, by driving Stanislaus from the throne. He held a conference at Zolkeaw, where Prince Menzikoff had taken up his quarters, with several of the Polish grandees, who came there to pay their court to him, before they met at a general assembly, to be held at Leopol; and the gracious manner in which he received them entirely gained him their affection.

In the first assembly, composed of the primate,

* Voltaire.

several bishops, palatines, and senators, it was resolved to renew the confederation of Sendomir, and the grand question was, "Whether they had any king or not?" which passing in the negative, they talked of declaring the throne vacant, and agreed to summon a Diet, to meet at Lublin in the following May. Peter attended this meeting with his son Alexis, then seventeen years of age, Prince Menzikoff, and some others of his ministers. In June they met again, when, after many debates, the throne was declared vacant, and thereupon, a Diet was summoned for a third election. A report being spread that the Tzar intended to propose his son as a candidate for the throne of Poland, to prevent any suspicion of that kind, he sent away the Tzarovitz to Moscow.

Peter urged to the Diet the strong necessity there was not to delay choosing a new sovereign, as the only way to reconcile the divided members of the republic, and to show that they looked upon Stanislaus in no other light than as Palatine of Posnania. He wrote to the primate and chief ministers of the crown, that he could not take any solid measure against Charles, and for the benefit of the republic, unless they chose a new king; stating that, if they would not do so, he could not forbear suspecting that they were not acting sincerely towards him. It was finally agreed that an interregnum should be publicly declared, and that the primate should be invested with the office of regent till the election had taken place. But in the meantime King Stanislaus had been acknowledged by most of the sovereigns of Europe; and, having left Charles in Saxony, was

advancing into Poland with General Renschild at the head of sixteen Swedish regiments, and received as lawful king at every place through which he had passed.

The Tzar was also informed that the king of Sweden, having replenished his military chest by the contributions he had levied in Saxony, and augmented his army to 50,000 men, in addition to the force under General Lewenhaupt, was meditating how he should bring the Tzar to an engagement. He was also informed, that the Porte had made propositions to Charles, and to Stanislaus, to join with them in an offensive alliance against Russia, with the view of forcing him to abstain from all interference in Polish affairs; and that, in consequence, Charles had openly declared his intention of making Russia the theatre of war, where he had no doubt of finding support from the people, dissatisfied with the expenses of the contest, and more so with the numerous innovations made in the manners and customs of their forefathers. The better part of the Tzar's subjects knew, however, that, unlike Charles, he made no war for personal ambition. Economical and simple in his tastes and habits, never was there a prince less prodigal of the revenues of the state. It may be truly said of him that, after an arduous and troublesome reign —after numerous grand designs and operations— after the construction and equipment of a powerful fleet, and a numerous and well appointed army, both of his own creation—he left to his successor the finances of the country in a flourishing condition, and his subjects unburdened by any public debt.

The French envoy to the court of Saxony made

an attempt, about this time, to bring about a reconciliation between the Tzar and the king of Sweden; but Charles made answer, that he would treat with the Tzar in the city of Moscow. It was on this occasion that Peter said, "My brother Charles wishes to act the part of Alexander, but he shall not find in me a Darius."

In August, 1707, Charles began his march from Alt-Ranstadt with his army above-mentioned. While his troops were passing the walls of Dresden, Charles paid an extraordinary visit to king Augustus, which, Voltaire observes, was running a great risk, to trust himself in the hands of a prince whom he had stripped of his kingdom. Charles, however, had nothing to fear with 50,000 good troops at his heels. In passing through Poland the Swedes committed such horrid ravages, that the peasantry rose in arms, and destroyed several of his soldiers from ambuscade, which the Swedes retaliated by murdering all that fell in their way, and reducing their habitations to ashes. The army went into winter quarters in Lithuania. The Russian army was quartered in the provinces of Grodno and Minsk.

While the two armies were thus taking up their winter quarters, the Tzar repaired to Moscow, where he had not been the last two years, and was received with every possible demonstration of joy. He witnessed with pleasure the completion of a large hospital, a dispensary, a cloth-manufactory, and glass-house, which he had planned when last in the city. Some other manufactories, of private individuals, were in progress, and, among others, that of pin-making, which Voltaire considers an

unanswerable proof of the ignorance of the people, that this should be among the first they attempted; and he had the satisfaction to find that the complaints and murmuring of the citizens at his new regulations had nearly subsided. But a courier having arrived from Menzikoff, on the first day of the new year, 1708, which his Tzarish Majesty was just celebrating, bringing an account of the movements of the king of Sweden, he immediately set out and fixed his head-quarters, with six hundred of the guards, in the city of Grodno, on the 6th February, where, by a mistake of one of his officers, he very narrowly escaped falling into the hands of the Swedish king: for Charles, having heard of his arrival there, hurried away with only eigth hundred of his guards, and marched directly to Grodno. A German officer, who commanded one of the gates of the town, on seeing the approach of the king, and supposing he was followed by his whole army, instead of disputing his passage, left it open. An alarm was immediately spread all over the town; the cry was, the enemy's whole force had entered; the few Russians, who attempted to oppose the Swedish guards, were cut in pieces; and the Tzar, being assured that the Swedes were masters of the town, retreated behind the ramparts, and Charles placed a guard at the very gate through which Peter had retired.

The Tzar now collected his forces in the palatinate of Minsk, and finding that Charles was pursuing him from the neighbourhood of Grodno, conceived the plan of drawing him on towards a part of the country, from which he could obtain little or no subsistence, where he would have no

magazines, nor safe retreat; and where, after establishing his own army behind secure lines, he might attack, with advantage, his fatigued troops. This was a masterly piece of generalship on the part of Peter, and the more so, since he could so place his own army as to leave open to it a retreat, if necessary, over a tract of country which would afford him plenty of subsistence. He marched, therefore, to the right bank of the Borysthenes or Dneiper, and entrenched himself between Mohilow, or Moghilé, and Orsha, the position which secured him an open and free communication with Smolensko. Having abundance of provisions for the main army, fifteen thousand men were sent under General Goltz, to join twelve thousand Cossacks, with orders to lay waste and destroy the country for thirty miles round, and then to rejoin the Tzar beyond the Borysthenes. This measure obliged the Swedes to canton their army, and to encamp for want of forage, till the month of May. Such was the position of the two armies in the spring of 1708.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Battle of Pultowa.

THE day was now approaching when the two heroes were, for the first and last time, to be brought into personal conflict, at the head of their respective armies; to measure their strength, to show their skill in military movements, and to fight *the* decisive battle.

The Russian army consisted at this time of about 100,000 effective men, of which 38,000 were infantry, about the same number of cavalry, 20,000 Cossacks, and 6000 Calmucks. The Swedes had 79 squadrons, 61 battalions of dragoons, and 101 battalions of infantry, making in the whole about 88,000 men; but inferiority, in point of numbers, was more than compensated by the superior skill of the officers and the higher quality of the troops.

It was not till the 25th of June that any affair of importance took place, when the king of Sweden came up with the division of 15,000 Russians, under General Goltz, who had encamped on the river Berezina, and was just joined by the two corps under Prince Repnin and the Field-marshal Scherematof. The king of Sweden made an attack on the three corps with the whole of his cavalry, which was gallantly received and vigourously resisted by the Russians. The action

lasted four hours, with great slaughter and great bravery on both sides. The Swedes lost a number of officers and 5000 men. The loss of the Russians was a major-general, sixteen captains, three lieutenants, and about 2000 men killed *. Charles was on horseback until Captain Gyllenstiern, a young Swede for whom he had a great esteem, was wounded and unable to march, when the king gave him his own horse, and fought, during the rest of the battle, on foot, at the head of his guards †. The Tzar did not arrive at this detachment of his army, till two days after the battle. A report being spread that Charles had threatened to push on direct for Moscow, there to dictate to Peter such conditions of peace as he might think proper, the latter had employed the corps, under Goltz, to lay waste the whole country between the Borysthenes and the frontiers of Smolensko, which was the direct line the Swedes would probably take, provided the king should attempt to carry his threat into execution; and this having been accomplished by the Russian general, nothing short of an act of madness could induce so large an army to take that route.

Charles, however, showed an indication of leading his forces into the Russian territories by crossing the Borysthenes. The Tzar observed his movements, but remained quietly in his position; not at all displeased to see the whole force of the enemy on that side of the river, where, in case of disaster, he could neither hope for succours,

* Nestesuranoi. † Mottley.

nor a safe retreat; and where a decisive victory only could save him. Peter, however, judged it advisable not to hazard, if it could be avoided, a general engagement, by which, if unsuccessful, an entrance would be laid open to the enemy into the very heart of his dominions. He resolved, therefore, after the manner of the Cossacks, to send out from his army several small corps, attacking, retreating, and wasting the country, so as to divert the enemy, and to make it difficult, if not impossible, for him to follow them. In the several skirmishes that took place, in some of which Charles exposed himself so as narrowly to escape with life, the Russians generally gave way, but left a waste behind them. Charles, however, still pushed on, in spite of all obstacles, almost to Smolensko, in the direct road to the capital of Russia. But at length his army becoming grievously exhausted by fatigue and famine, and perpetually harassed by the constant attacks of the Russian skirmishers and Cossacks,—and finding, moreover, that the adherents he had flattered himself he should meet with, on entering Russia, entirely failed him,—he gave up all hope of reaching Moscow, where he had fondly flattered himself to treat of peace with his brother Peter, and turned suddenly towards the Ukraine. This false step proved the ruin of Charles and his army.

Peter, under whose orders the king of Sweden had been thus harassed, was at a loss to comprehend what could possibly be the intentions of Charles in making this desperate movement towards the Ukraine, which appeared to him nothing less than the road to certain destruction,

as that country was well defended by 30,000 Cossacks, under the command of the Hetman Mazeppa, on whose fidelity he placed the utmost confidence. The mystery, however, of this movement was soon explained. Mazeppa, from some real or fancied slight he had received from the Tzar, had turned traitor, and sent a favourite officer to Charles to say, that the people of the Ukraine regarded him as their liberator, and that they would receive him with open arms. Seduced by this proffered support, Charles was prevailed on to take a step which, among other disadvantages, had that of separating himself from his best general, Lewenhaupt. This able officer did all he could to form a junction with the army under the king, but he had to traverse a ruined country, and was continually pursued and harassed in his march by General Bauer, who never for a moment lost sight of him. This general passed the Borysthenes on the 6th October at Mohilow, where he joined the Tzar, the Prince Menzikoff, and General Goltz, so that Lewenhaupt found himself surrounded by fifty or sixty thousand Russians, commanded by the Tzar in person.

The Swedish general made a charge on the outposts of the Russians, near the village of Lesno, and killed some four or five hundred men, when, after the first volley, the Russian infantry gave way and took to flight. Peter, on hearing this, was highly incensed, and gave immediate orders that a number of Cossacks and Calmucks should be placed behind the line, with positive directions to sabre every man who should attempt to quit the ranks, without regard to persons, even

himself, if he should be guilty of such cowardly conduct.

Lewenhaupt, after this affair, continued his march towards Propoisk, over roads nearly impracticable, intersected by woods and marshes, and pursued by a Russian army, which had been reinforced by three or four thousand dragoons, close to his heels. Lewenhaupt soon saw that the only chance left for safety was on the issue of a battle. For this purpose he made the best possible disposition to receive the Russians; he placed two battalions in advance, which were furiously attacked by Colonel Zambel with four battalions of the Tzar's guards; the result was, that at least half of the battalion of the Swedes were left on the field. This affair brought on a general action, in which the Tzar, amidst a most tremendous fire, passed from one part of the line to the other, and was every where animating, by his valour and his presence, both officers and soldiers. The battle continued with the greatest obstinacy the whole day, when the Swedes retired behind their baggage-wagons, and the fire began to slacken.

The night having come on, and the difficulty of dislodging the enemy from behind his wagons being apparent, Peter forbade his officers, on pain of being cashiered, and his soldiers on the penalty of death, to go out for the plunder of the dead bodies; and also ordered the whole army to remain under arms. It was observed that the Swedes kept up, during the night, great fires around the wagons. At dawn of day the Tzar had ordered that an attack should be made upon

the Swedes, but it was discovered that Lewenhaupt had gone off in the course of the night, leaving behind him the wounded to the discretion of the Russians, and also the 7000 wagons destined to relieve the wants of the army under the king his master. Lewenhaupt swam the river Sissa with the remains of his army, and escaped with about four thousand men to join the king of Sweden at Starudub upon the Desna. the prisoners taken by the Russians were—103 officers, 2673 men, 47 colours, 10 standards, 16 pieces of cannon, 7000 wagons, and all the arms, ammunition, and baggage. The loss of the Russians was 70 officers killed or dangerously wounded, and 1200 soldiers killed or wounded. Among the wounded officers were his highness of Darmstadt, General Bauer, and Colonel Weyde. This was the first great battle in which the Tzar was present in person, and the first pitched battle obtained by the Russians against an enemy who had gained so many victories over them. It was estimated that the total loss of the Swedes, under Lewenhaupt, amounted to eight thouasnd men, seventeen pieces of cannon, and forty-four colours, and the whole convoy of provisions intended for that part of the army under Charles, of which it stood in the greatest need.

In the meantime, Charles was very uneasy at the non-arrival of Lewenhaupt on the expected day, and equally so on hearing nothing from Mazeppa, by whom he now began to suspect he was betrayed. Just, however, as he was preparing to pass the Desna, Mazeppa made his appearance.—not, indeed, with a reinforcement of

20,000 men, and a large supply of provisions, as he had promised, but with two regiments only, and rather as a fugitive, who was in need of succours himself, than as a powerful prince bringing assistance to an ally placed in difficult circumstances. He reported to the king that he had begun his march with sixteen thousand men, intended to be led, as he had made them believe, against the king of Sweden, who was desolating their country, and promising them that, after obtaining the honour of obstructing his progress, they would, for this piece of service, lay the powerful Tzar of Russia under eternal obligation, and be rewarded accordingly.

Mazeppa further stated that, on approaching the Desna, he had thought it right to undeceive his men, and therefore made them acquainted with his real design; and they received the proposed act of revolt with indignation, and positively refused to betray a monarch, against whom they had no grounds of complaint, and that too, for the sake of a Swede, who was marching an army into the heart of their country, and who, having laid it waste, would afterwards leave them to the mercy of the powerful Tzar whom they had outraged. The result was that, with the exception of the few men he had brought with him, all the rest deserted him, and returned to their homes.

This intelligence was a severe blow to Charles in the present reduced state of his army, and the unfortunate position in which he was placed. Mazeppa informed him that he had still possession of some fortresses in the Ukraine, and par-

ticularly that of Bathurin, which was his place of residence, and the capital of the Cossacks. This place, situated near the forests of the Desna, was not of sufficient strength to stand a siegē, but might serve to impede the Russians, and cause them to divide their forces. He ordered, therefore, a reinforcement to strengthen its garrison. The Tzar, however, had already sent Menzikoff and Galitzin, by a circuitous route, to attack this fortress, and on their appearing before it, the town was taken almost without resistance, plundered, and reduced to ashes.

A council of war was now held at the Russian head-quarters, when sentence of excommunication was passed on Mazeppa by the Archbishop of Kiow, assisted by two other prelates; after which the traitor was hanged in effigy, and some of his accomplices, taken in Bathurin, were broken on the wheel. The principal men of the Cossacks then repaired to the church, and, after divine service, assembled in a large body to elect a new Hetman; when the choice having fallen on John Skoropatsky, he was declared their general amidst the acclamations of the people. This new general, attended by Menzikoff and Golofkin, and by a great number of the officers, went immediately to the quarters of the Tzar, who confirmed his election.

All this happened in the month of November, at which inclement season Charles had to march through a country that was quite desolate, all the villages having been burnt or destroyed; nor did it appear that he had any definite object in view; while the defeat of Lewenhaupt and the disappoint-

ment of Mazeppa's reinforcement, and the setting in of winter, appeared to render his situation hopeless. In the month of December the cold became so extremely intense that, in one of the marches, an enormous number of men are stated to have dropped down, either dying at once on the spot, or being left behind to perish. The Russians had their own country open to them in the rear, and received all manner of supplies; but the poor Swedes, being nearly naked, and half famished, were unable to resist the inclemency of the weather. The effective force of the Swedish army was now reduced to about five and twenty thousand men, besides the shattered remains of Lewenhaupt's corps, which could not exceed five thousand, and those brought with Mazeppa, which might be about two thousand more.

Reduced to this deplorable situation, the Swedish chancellor, Count Piper, the able and prudent adviser of the king, entreated him to halt in a small town of the Ukraine, called Romira, where he might entrench his fatigued and dispirited army, and, in all probability, be supplied with provisions by means of Mazeppa. Every rational consideration ought to have prevailed on the king to listen to this advice, especially as the Russians were gone into winter-quarters, and not disposed to molest him; but Charles, with habitual obstinacy, said it was beneath his dignity to shut himself up in a town. Piper then endeavoured to prevail on him to re-pass the Desna and the Borysthenes, and to retrace his steps into Poland; there to put his troops into quarters, and to obtain those refreshments of which they stood so greatly in need.

He represented to him the absolute necessity there was, independent of their own deplorable condition, to support King Stanislaus, whom he himself had raised to the throne of Poland, and to defeat the views, which the adverse party had of a new election, which would probably be carried in favour of his enemy, the late King Augustus. But this proposal had no better success. Charles replied, that if he did this, it would be considered the same thing as flying before the Tzar; that as to the season, it might be expected soon to grow milder; that he was determined to subdue the Ukraine, and then to march straight forward to Moscow: such was the infatuation that had got possession of the mind of Charles.

Both armies, however, were compelled, from the intense cold of December and January, to remain in a state of inactivity. Charles first broke ground, by sending out detachments, as soon as the men were able to handle their arms, to attack and drive in the several small posts, which had been placed by the Russians to obstruct his movements. This, in fact, was absolutely necessary, to enable him to obtain subsistence, the army being driven to the last extremity. For twenty leagues round, the peasantry of the Ukraine were robbed and pillaged by the Swedes; nor does it appear that the latter were at all obstructed by the Russians, who remained quietly in their winter-quarters. Peter having, in all probability, deemed it the better policy to leave the Swedish army unmolested, knowing that it was rapidly mouldering away.

The senseless obstinacy of Charles was the ruin of himself and his whole army. In February he

began his march across the Ukraine, to the south-east, burning all the villages and peasants' houses as he passed along, till he reached the sandy deserts to the westward of the river Donetz, which passes through the country of the Don Cossacks. What his object could have been in taking this direction it is not easy to conjecture: but it is quite clear he was wholly unacquainted with the nature of the country. He was, therefore, compelled to retrace his steps, and return across that very territory which he had just laid waste. His army, destitute of provisions, swept away the few remaining cattle from the peasantry, who, in their turn, murdered the soldiers, whenever they were strong enough to contend with them. This marching and countermarching, by which his army was daily wasting in numbers, continued nearly three months, without answering any other purpose than that of harrassing and weakening his forces. In the month of May he reached the river Vorskla, on which is situated the small fortified town of Pultowa, a place that had been garrisoned by the Russians, under the command of General Allart, an experienced engineer officer. This place the Tzar had taken care to supply with abundance of provisions and ammunition, considering it as a point of the greatest importance that it should not be occupied by the Swedes. It is so situated, that several passes lead from it through the mountains, in a northerly direction, all of which communicate with the great road to Moscow; and as Charles seemed to have made up his mind not to relinquish his proud vision of dictating a peace to the Tzar in the Kremlin, he conceived the first

step towards it would be the possession of Pultowa.

Charles, accordingly, laid siege to this fortified place, with about eighteen thousand men, the remains of an army consisting of at least forty thousand, when he left Saxony the year before. Peter was fully prepared for its defence; and while Charles had been employed in wasting his army, the Tzar had availed himself of the winter months in visiting his establishments on the Don, from Voronitz to Azoph; had given orders for improving the harbours, for constructing an additional number of ships, and for repairing and strengthening the fortresses of Taganroc. On his return he was made fully acquainted with the proceedings of Charles; and on the 15th of June, 1709, he appeared before Pultowa, with an army from fifty to sixty thousand strong. He forthwith detached Menzikoff, with a corps, to make a feint, as if he was about to offer battle to the besiegers, who came out of their trenches to accept the challenge, and, by this diversion, Menzikoff succeeded in throwing into the place a reinforcement of troops, which increased the garrison to about two thousand men. When Charles discovered this manœuvre, he could not forbear saying, "I see well that we have taught the Muscovites the art of war."

Peter, having now determined to bring on a general action, disposed his army in two long lines, between the Borysthenes and the Vorskla which falls into the former, forming, at the junction, rather an acute angle, into which the Swedes would be driven, in the event of a defeat. He covered these lines by several redoubts, hastily

thrown up, behind which he placed his cavalry and artillery. Several skirmishes had taken place before Pultowa, in one of which Charles received a wound from a shot, which shattered the bone of his heel, and obliged him to keep his bed for a few days, after undergoing a painful surgical operation. While in this situation, he received intelligence that Peter appeared to be meditating a general attack; upon which he ordered his whole army to be drawn out from the entrenchments, to receive the enemy, and caused himself to be carried in a litter. The Swedes commenced the battle, and made so vigorous an attack on the Russian redoubts, behind which the cavalry was posted, that, in spite of a heavy and continual fire from the artillery, they carried two of them sword in hand. The Russians acted with great steadiness; and the Tzar, as major-general, drew up his army in a regular and masterly style.

The troops were now everywhere engaged, and the battle became general. The right wing of the Russians was commanded by General Bauer, the left by Prince Menzikoff, and the centre by Field-marshal Scherematof. The action lasted two hours. The two sovereigns seemed to feel that they were engaged in a battle which was to decide the fate of Russia or Sweden. They were everywhere in the front of their respective armies, exposing themselves to the very hottest of the fire. Charles, with a pistol in his hand, was carried in his litter from rank to rank; one of its bearers was killed by a cannon-ball, which shattered the litter in pieces. Another conveyance was instantly provided; or, as Voltaire says, he then ordered his

men to carry him upon their pikes. Peter received several shots in his clothes, one through his hat, and several pierced his saddle. Menzikoff had three horses shot under him.

At length the Swedes gave way on every part, and fell into confusion. "The invincible Swedes," says Peter, "turned their backs, and their whole army, cavalry, as well as infantry, was overthrown, with very little loss on our part *." The rout now became general, and the slaughter dreadful. There remained on the field of battle, and near the redoubts, nine thousand two hundred and twenty-four of the enemy, besides two or three thousand prisoners, chiefly cavalry, that were taken in the action. Among them were Major-Generals Stackelberg and Hamilton, Marshal Renschild, the Prince of Wirtemberg, and many other officers.

"Thus," continues the Tzar's journal, "by the favour of the Almighty, this victory, to which there are few to be compared, was obtained with little trouble and little blood, over the proud king of Sweden, by the prudent and gallant conduct of his Majesty in person, and by the valour of his chiefs and soldiers: for, in this affair of such great importance, his Majesty exposed himself, for his subjects and his country, without sparing his own person, like a true and great captain. It may be added, that in this great combat, our first line only was engaged; the second was not brought up till the action was over †."

On the evening of this proud day Peter dined under his tent, in company with all his general

* Journal de Pierre le Grand. † Ibid.

and field-officers, and invited, also, the Swedish general officers who had been made prisoners in the battle, and Count Piper, the Swedish minister, the two secretaries of the king, Cederholm and Diben, who had all surrendered themselves. In the course of the entertainment, Peter took occasion to drink a health "to his masters in the art of war." Renschild inquired whom his Majesty was pleased to honour with such a title? "Yourselves, gentlemen, the brave Swedish generals," replied the Tzar. "Then," asked the general, "has not your Majesty been somewhat ungrateful in dealing so hardly with your masters?" Peter was not displeased at the compliment, and, turning to the general, inquired what number of men the king of Sweden might actually have had in the field on that memorable day? and, on being told by Renschild, that he had about nineteen thousand Swedes, and ten or eleven thousand Cossacks; "How is it possible," said the Tzar, "that a prince so prudent as the king of Sweden could have thought of leading such a handful of men into a country unknown to him, and especially into such a country as this?" To which Renschild replied, "It was not always that he and his brother officers were consulted respecting the operations of the war, but as faithful subjects they all felt it was their duty not to oppose, but to obey their king." The Tzar was so much pleased with this reply that he took his own sword from his side, and, presenting it to Renschild, requested he would wear it as a token of esteem, not alone for his valour, but also for his fidelity to his sovereign*.

* Voltaire, Nestesuranoi, Mottley, &c.

He made many anxious inquiries after the fate of Charles; and, as none of the prisoners could give any information of what had befallen him, he ordered a strict search to be made among the slain, to ascertain whether this unfortunate prince might not have fallen in the battle, more particularly as he had been told that his litter was found shattered in pieces.

Charles, however, having perceived that the day was lost, and that his only chance of safety was to retire with the utmost precipitation, suffered himself to be mounted on horseback, though some say in Meyerfeldt's carriage with twelve horses, and with the remains of his army under Marshal Lewenhaupt, fled to the southward, to a place called Perewolochna, situated in the very angle formed by the junction of the Vorskla with the Borysthenes,—the exact point to which the Tzar had supposed he would retreat in the event of a defeat. Here, accompanied by the traitor Mazeppa, and a few hundred of his followers, Charles swam the latter great river, and proceeding over a desolate country, in danger of perishing with hunger, at length reached the Bog, where he was kindly received by the Turkish pacha, who afforded him refreshments and boats to pass that river. The Tzar says, however, that the king and the traitor Mazeppa, having presented themselves at Otchakow, near the mouth of that river, the pacha could not permit them to enter the city, for fear of displeasing the sultan; and that they therefore continued their march till they reached Bender on the Dniester. Here, as Voltaire observes, Charles gave a proof of that

unreasonable obstinacy which occasioned all his misfortunes in Turkey, and led to a series of adventures more becoming an Orlando Furioso than a wise prince—and of which this lively writer has given a narrative, that appears to partake more of romance than of truth. The proof he gave of his obstinacy at Bender was this, that when advised to write to the grand vizier, according to the custom of the Turks, he said it was beneath his dignity. The same obstinacy placed him successively at variance with all the ministers of the Porte; in short, says Voltaire, "he knew not how to accommodate himself either to time or place *."

But to return to the shattered remains of the Swedish army, left at Perewolochna under General Lewenhaupt, and which are stated, in the Tzar's journal, to amount to about fourteen thousand men. On the evening of the day of battle, Lieutenant-general Prince Galitzin, at the head of the regiments of guards, and Lieutenant-general Bauer of the dragoons, amounting, together, to about ten thousand men, were sent in pursuit. On the 30th, that is, three days after the battle, Menzikoff, with about nine hundred men, came in sight of the enemy posted at the foot of the mountains on the right bank of the Borysthenes, near Perewolochna, and sent immediately to summon Lewenhaupt to surrender, representing to him that all retreat and hope of safety were cut off. The Swedish general, sensible that this was the case, did not hesitate to conclude and sign a treaty the same day, by which his whole army were declared

* Voltaire, &c.

to be prisoners of war, and all the artillery, with the military chest, the chancellory, and the standards, were surrendered to the victors. The generals here taken were Lewenhaupt, Schlippenbach, Rosen, Stakelberg, and Creutz. "Thus," says the Tzar, "by the favour of God, all this famous army of the enemy, which, during its stay in Saxony, had been the terror of Europe, fell into the hands of his Majesty; for not a man of it escaped—all but a few hundreds, which passed the Dnieper with the king, having surrendered themselves to the victorious arms of Russia*."

Though Peter greatly admired the gallant spirit of his brother Charles, as he used to call him, yet, when he looked upon the Swedish prisoners, the fate of so many unhappy men touched him sensibly, and he more than once spoke of the indignation he felt at the conduct of a prince who could sacrifice, in so wanton and useless a manner, to his ambition, so many brave and faithful subjects, of whom he ought to have been the father and protector. At the same time, whatever Peter's feelings might have been at the sight of so many gallant men, reduced to such a deplorable condition, they did not prevent him from giving orders that the greater part of them should be sent to Siberia, then a wild, uninhabited, and barren country. To this measure we must mainly ascribe those improvements, which have now made a large portion of Siberia not only habitable, but a desirable place of residence; but it is melancholy to reflect that, for the mere gratification of

* Journal de Pierre le Grand.

the personal vanity of one man, so many thousand lives should have been wantonly sacrificed, and that of the 80,000 brave fellows, who marched in full health and vigour to the slaughter, not one in one thousand, probably, was destined ever to return to his country and his friends. Charles had not even the plea of state necessity or expediency to urge for this quixotic expedition; he would seem, indeed, to have forgotten that he had a country; Glory was the mistress he courted and fought for—but she deserted him and fled to his more fortunate and more deserving rival; for Peter, to say the least, had his country's weal at heart.

All Europe felt the effects of the battle of Pultowa. The Saxons called out loudly for revenge on a prince who had pillaged and plundered their country. Their elector, Augustus, issued his protest against an extorted abdication, and was impatient to reascend the Polish throne. The Poles were now ready to assist him, and King Stanislaus declared himself equally ready to abdicate, if required to do so. Sweden was in a state of the greatest consternation, supposing for a long time her king to be dead, and under this uncertainty was incapable of coming to any resolution. The influence of this great battle, if we were to believe Voltaire, extended even to England; but here he is under a mistake as to facts. In 1708 it happened that the Russian ambassador, Matveof, was arrested in London for debt, and, after a long correspondence between the two courts, the parliament passed an act to prevent, in future, the arrest of an ambassador for debt; and Queen Anne sent

Mr. (afterwards Lord) Whitworth to Russia, in the character of an ambassador extraordinary, with an explanatory and apologetical letter to the Tzar solely on that occasion; but, says Voltaire, after the battle of Pultowa, it became necessary to give a more public satisfaction to the Tzar; and Mr. Whitworth opened his speech with the following words, "*Most high and most mighty Emperor!*—the acknowledgment was sufficient, and the title of *emperor, which the queen had not given him before the battle of Pultowa*, plainly showed the degree of estimation to which he was now raised in Europe." Now, Voltaire must have known, when he wrote this, that Queen Anne neither did, nor could know, what had happened at Pultowa, when Mr. Whitworth was despatched from England. Her letter to the Tzar is dated in the early part of August; the battle was fought on the 9th July, and intelligence, at that time, was not conveyed from the lowest part of the Ukraine to Moscow, and from Moscow to England, in something less than a month. Besides, the Tzars before Peter's time had been not unfrequently addressed by the title of Emperor.

There can be no doubt that Peter gained a degree of reputation from the victory of Pultowa, which greatly facilitated the conquests that immediately followed it. The first was that of Elbing, the Swedish garrison of which surrendered themselves, and an immense quantity of guns, mortars, and ammunition into the hands of the besiegers. The Tzar, before the winter was over, had invested Wyberg, the chief town of Carelia, on the northern shore of the gulf of

Finland. Riga was next besieged; but a dreadful pestilence was then raging in this part of Livonia, which is said to have swept away from eight to nine thousand Russians; the Tzar makes his loss amount to 9800 men; and on this account they turned the siege into a blockade. About the middle of July, 1810, the garrison captulated, on condition that all the Livonian officers and soldiers should remain in the service of the Tzar, as natives of a country that had once belonged to Russia, but wrested from her by the predecessors of Charles XII., and stripped of its ancient privileges. The surrender of Pernau and Revel completed the conquest of Livonia. Count Stremberg, the governor of Riga, stated that the pestilence had destroyed little short of 60,000 persons among the huddled population of that city and its suburbs.

But the most striking and immediate effect of this victory was that which it produced on the Poles, whose great anxiety seemed to be the speedy removal of King Stanislaus, to make room for the reinstatement of King Augustus, who was equally ready to resume the throne he had been compelled to abdicate. With this view he hastened to Thorn to make his reconciliation with Peter for his former defection, where the meeting took place privately in the king's yacht. Irritable as the temper of the Tzar generally was, his disposition was very far from being implacable; in the present instance he had the gratification of restoring a monarch to his crown, and the political motive of including Poland, with the kings of Denmark and Prussia, in a treaty against Sweden,

the object of which was to recover from Charles all the conquests of Gustavus Adolphus—Russia setting up pretensions to her ancient possessions of Livonia, Ingria, and a part of Finland; Denmark laying claim to Scania; and Prussia to Pomerania.

After this interview the Tzar proceeded to Prussia, where he had a meeting with the king, at Marienwerder, and completed a treaty with him, in his own person; for Peter had seldom occasion for the assistance of an ambassador in his negociations. With his usual activity he then turned to Riga, to give directions respecting the future government of that place, thence to Petersburg to inspect the progress of, and give the necessary orders respecting, the buildings and arrangements of his new and favourite capital, which he never lost sight of. A letter in his own hand appeared among the family papers of Apraxin, dated from the camp at Pultowa, at nine in the evening of the day of battle, which has this paragraph: "At length, thank God, the foundation stone of Petersburg is laid." While at Petersburg he laid down the keel of a large ship of war, and then set off for Moscow, where he found preparations making for the exhibition of a splendid triumph, by which the grateful citizens meant to express their sense of the distinguished and important services rendered by him to his country.

CHAPTER IX.

The Battle of the Pruth.

Charles XII. had no sooner reached Bender, and experienced the hospitality of the Turks, than he despatched Poniatowski to Constantinople, with instructions to use all the means he could devise to induce the vizier to prevail on his master to commence hostilities against the Russians, taking care to impress strongly on his mind a conviction, that their next object would be to invade some part of the grand seignior's dominions. He conceived that such a representation would produce its effect on the Turks; and accordingly, he was soon informed by his ambassador that he had succeeded so well with the vizier, as to leave no doubt of his forthwith publishing a declaration of war against Russia, for that this minister had told him, "he would take him (Charles) in one hand, and his sword in the other, and conduct him to Moscow, at the head of 200,000 men." This piece of gasconade however, whether of Poniatowski or the vizier, did not avail the king of Sweden, who learned, with great mortification, that Count Tolstoy, the Tzar's envoy, was in such high favour at the Sublime Porte, that he had demanded, and was all but promised, that the traitor Mazeppa should be delivered up to Peter, as Charles had demanded, and obtained possession of, the unfor-

tunate Patkul; but the old Hetman of the Cossacks escaped this fate by taking a disease which hastened his death.

But the object, which the king of Sweden was unable to effect through the means of one vizier, was brought about by a new one, in conjunction with the khan of the Crimean Tartars, the latter of whom had become apprehensive, and not without reason, of so formidable a neighbour as had now got possession of Azoph. The Porte, too, had taken umbrage at the appearance of Russian ships on the Palus-Mœotis and the Black Sea, and was alarmed at the building of so many ships on the Don, and at the extensive works carrying on in the harbour of Taganroc. It seem this khan of the Crimea had paid a visit to Charles at Bender, where such a statement of complaints and grievances was concocted between them as, on being presented by Poniatowski, tended greatly to awaken the sultan's jealousy of the intentions of the Russians. The khan proceeded to Constantinople, and demanded an audience of the sultan. He confirmed all that was stated in the memorial, and added, that the Russians were committing all kinds of ravages on the frontiers of the Turkish provinces, murdering innocent believers, and plundering them of their property; and concluded with a request, that the great council should forthwith be called together, in order to ascertain their sentiments on the imminent dangers that threatened the whole Ottoman empire. The council met accordingly, and, without examining the question, decided that war was advisable, and the sooner it was declared the

better. The question was then put to the mufti, whether it was lawful to go to war, according to the Koran. The reply of the mufti was short and pithy,—"The law answers, it is necessary." Upon this Count Tolstoy, the Tzar's ambassador, was arrested in the public streets of Constantinople, and committed, together with his domestics, to the castle of the Seven Towers.

"Never," says Voltaire, "was sovereign more offended in the person of his ministers than the Tzar of Muscovy. Within the space of a few years, his ambassador at the court of London was imprisoned for debt; his plenipotentiary in Poland and Saxony was broken on the wheel by order of the King of Sweden; and his minister to the Porte was seized and imprisoned at Constantinople, like a common malefactor."

The Tzar lost not a moment in making preparations for a Turkish campaign, by ordering a division of his army to advance from Poland to Moldavia. The Field-marshal Scherematof was directed to march from Livonia with another body of troops towards the same quarter. Admiral Apraxin was to take command of the fleet at Azoph and on the Black Sea; Admiral Cruys, a Dutchman, to guard the coasts of Livonia in the Baltic; and Prince Menzikoff was left at the head of affairs in Petersburg. Peter, having made these dispositions, set out for Moscow to arrange matters for the administration of the government during his absence in the approaching campaign. He appointed a regency of eight senators, among whom was Prince P. Galitzin and Prince M. Dolgorouki, who proceeded to the

church of the Assumption, and there, in presence of his Majesty, the senate, and the principal authorities, took an oath to fulfil their duties with honour, integrity, and activity; to be faithful to the sovereign and the state, to observe strict justice in all matters public and private, and lastly, to act with good faith as well with regard to the levying of money and men as in all other things relating to the interests of the state. At the same time, as some inconvenience was felt in the army, from the necessity of raising persons of low description to the rank of officers, while the sons of the nobility studiously avoided the service, Peter sent an ordinance to the senate, directing them to assemble all those of a certain age, and to enrol them among the conscripts. He gave orders, also, that the army of Livonia, which had suffered so much from the plague, should be forthwith completed by recruits, to be sent to the frontier of Wallachia *.

Having completed his arrangements at Moscow, he caused it to be declared solemnly in public, on the 6th March, 1711, that her Majesty the Tzarina Catharine Alexiuna was the true and legitimate wife of the Emperor Peter I †. Voltaire says he had privately married the young captive of Marienburg, in 1707, but that the marriage was only made public the same day on which he set out with his consort, in order to measure his strength with the Ottoman Porte. It is frequently difficult to reconcile the different

* Journal de Pierre le Grand.
† Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce.

dates given by different writers of the Tzar's story, Captain Bruce, who was himself present on the spot, says, "On the 17th (May), we arrived at Warsaw, and at Jaweroff, on the 29th, where we found the Tzar and Tzarina, and *there* they were privately married, at which ceremony the General (Bruce) was present, and upon this occasion he was made Master General of the Ordnance, in the room of the Prince of Melita, who died a prisoner in Sweden. General Bruce was at this time knight of four orders, namely, St. Andrew, the White Eagle, the Black Eagle, and the Elephant;" and here he adds, "I received my commission as captain in the artillery and engineer *." Peter I. will probably be considered to know more correctly than Peter Bruce, the day on which, and the place where, he was married. It is possible, however, that having here joined the army, he may have thought it right to repeat the declaration previously made in Moscow.

Be that as it may, Catharine accompanied her august husband to the war in Turkey. This extraordinary woman proved herself, in all respects, and under all circumstances, superior to her sex, as well as to her birth and her early misfortunes. To the Tzar she was all in all; she stood in the same relation to him, that the kind-hearted Josephine did to Napoleon; both had been the mistresses of the men they married, and also of others before them; both possessed the art, or rather the natural and persuasive manners, to smooth down the asperity, assuage the

* Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce.

anger, and allay the excitements to which their respective husbands were but too prone; they both ascended an Imperial throne; but here the parallel ends—the one was most undeservedly cast aside, on the pretence of political expediency, the other maintained her high station and succeeded as sole autocratrix of all the Russias. The cheerfulness and liveliness of Catharine's temper, the sweetness and complacency of her disposition, her mild and affable behaviour, her unremitting attention, and unwearied assiduity, her agreeable manners and conversation, had acquired such an ascendency over the mind of Peter, that he was never so happy as when she was near his person. It has been mentioned that the Tzar was subject to that particular species of spasmodic affection which has been called cataleptic: whenever this happened, and Catharine was within call, she was always sent for, and such was the fascination of her presence that, from the moment his eye caught her smiling face, and his ear was greeted with the soft accents of her voice, the muscles began to relax, his agony was composed, his mind became tranquil, and in a short time *Peter* "was himself again;" just as the sweet tones of David's harp had the power to draw out from Saul the *evil spirit* that tormented him. She attended him in all his travels and his most hazardous expeditions, sharing his fatigues and soothing his cares,—in fact, she became necessary to his health, his comfort, and even to his existence.

General Gordon says "she was a very pretty well-lookt woman, of good sense, but not of that

sublimity of wit, or rather that quickness of imagination, which some people have believed. The great reason why the Tzar was so fond of her was her exceeding good temper; she never was seen peevish or out of humour: obliging and civil to all, and never forgetful of her former condition; withal mighty grateful *." Many a wretch escaped the effects of the Tzar's wrath by her interposition. "Catharine," says Voltaire, "saved more backs from the knout, and more heads from the block, than General Le Fort had ever done." Great indeed must have been the merit of this woman, who, having risen to the most elevated station, from an obscure and almost unknown origin, maintained her lofty position without incurring the envy, hatred, or even jealousy of those over whom it was her destiny to rule.

"Catharine," says Coxe, who cites from competent authorities, "maintained the pomp of majesty united with an air of ease and grandeur; and Peter frequently expressed his admiration at the propriety with which she supported her high station, without forgetting that she was not born to that dignity. She bore her elevation meekly, and was never, as Gordon asserts, forgetful of her former condition. When Wurmb, who had been tutor to Gluck's children, at the time that Catharine was a domestic in the same family, presented himself before her, after the public solemnisation of her marriage with Peter, she said, 'What! thou good man, art thou still alive?

* Gordon's History of Peter the Great.

I will provide for thee;' and gave him a pension. She was also no less attentive to the family of her benefactor Gluck, who died a prisoner at Moscow: she pensioned his widow, made his son a page; portioned the two eldest daughters, and appointed the youngest a maid of honour*."

At Sorokat the Tzar joined the main body of the army, which is described by Bruce to have consisted of five divisions of 6,000 men each, commanded by Marshal Scherematof; the first was the Tzar's own division, the second General Weyde's, the third Prince Repnin's, the fourth General Hallard's (or Allard's), and the fifth General Reutzel's; in all 30,000 foot, attended by a very numerous train of artillery. Thirty-thousand dragoons had been detached to destroy a fortress and magazine erected by the Turks upon the Neister, a little above Bender; besides these, 50,000 Calmuck Tartars and 20,000 Cossacks were on their march to join the army, which would then amount to 130,000†. None of these however arrived, and the whole of the Russian army on the Pruth did not exceed, but rather fell short of, 40,000 men,—a considerable corps under General Renne having crossed to the eastern side of Moldavia, upon the river Sireth.

His Majesty being now resolved to march without waiting for the rest of his forces to join, issued a general order for all the women who attended the army to be sent away; the Tzarina, however, was not thus to be disposed of; she in-

* Coxe's Travels in Russia.
† Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce.

sisted on accompanying his Majesty, and she knew well she would not be refused. Her husband, apprehensive of exposing her to a danger which every day became more menacing, wished her to return; but Catharine considered this solicitude of Peter as an affront to her affection and her courage. She urged her husband in such strong terms, that Peter found it impossible to deprive himself of her company*. The soldiers with joy beheld her on horseback at the head of the army, for she rarely used a carriage. Her presence gave encouragement and diffused alacrity among the troops; she was always ready to send refreshments and assistance to the sick, whether officers or private soldiers. The general officers, knowing her influence with the Tzar, petitioned her to obtain the same liberty for their wives that they might attend her Majesty, which was also granted. After this, the wives of the other officers conceiving themselves equally entitled to the indulgence, prevailed on the good-natured Catharine to intercede for them, which she readily undertook to do, and the result was that they all went, notwithstanding the prohibitory order. "This circumstance," says Bruce, "although it considerably augmented the train of our baggage, proved in the end a very fortunate one." He might well say so—it proved the salvation of the Tzar, his army, and perhaps of Russia—all of which were placed in imminent peril by the misplaced confidence of Peter and the incautious rapidity of his movements.

* Journal de Pierre le Grand.

Peter proceeded from Sorokat towards Jassy, the capital of Moldavia, having entered into a secret engagement with Brancovan Prince of Wallachia, who not only undertook to join the Tzar with his whole force, but to provide his army abundantly with provisions and forage. Whether he was a traitor, or meant to act with good faith, was never brought to the test; for the Sultan, having been informed of his intended revolt, had deprived him of his principality; and having some suspicion of the fidelity of Mavrocordato, who was the Hospodar of Moldavia, the Sultan deposed him too, and appointed Cantimir Prince or Hospodar of Wallachia, who was directed to proceed forthwith, with orders to seize Brancovan, under colour of friendship, or on any other pretence, and send him, dead or alive, to Constantinople; and, at the same time, to throw a bridge over the Neister, to facilitate the passage of his army to oppose the Russians. Cantimir, however, being a Christian, had experienced how little faith was to be expected from the Turk, and as a Christian prince, he felt bound in honour, and for the cause of the Christian religion, to forsake that of the infidel, and make an offer of himself and his principality to the Tzar. Peter, however, having been deceived by Brancovan, was not disposed to place much confidence in the sincerity of Cantimir. He had waited three days at Jassy for the expected supplies of men and provisions promised by Brancovan; but finding that the envoy of that Hospodar only answered him with unceasing compliments and ceremonies, and having reason to suspect the honesty of his master, he began to think that he had placed him-

self pretty much in the same condition with his brother Charles, when invited into the Ukraine by Mazeppa.

Something, however, was necessary to be done. His army had been brought into a wild and barren country, destitute of provisions or forage. The swarms of locusts that obscure the face of the sun, when in flight, and cover the whole surface of the ground when at rest, had eaten up every blade of grass, and every green herb; there was no water but what the river afforded; their magazines were nearly exhausted, and the army considered itself as betrayed and surrounded by enemies; and, though Cantimir had proffered to join him, he honestly admitted that his Moldavian subjects were attached to the Porte, and hostile to the Russians. In this disastrous situation, Peter had, at least, the satisfaction to find, that not a man deserted, nor a murmur escaped from his army.

The Russian soldier has always sustained the character which was formed under Peter. "He will not," says a writer, who knew them well, "fall back one step while his commander bravely keeps his ground; he contents himself with extremely little pay, and with very slender diet, and is always cheerful; hungry and thirsty, he traverses the heavy sands of the deserts under the load of his accoutrements without murmur or complaint; executes every command; reckons nothing impossible or too difficult; does everything that he is ordered, without shunning any danger, and is inventive of a thousand means for accomplishing his designs *."

* Tooke's View of the Russian Empire.

With such men the Tzar was on the eve of encountering an immensely superior force in point of numbers. The enemy was close at hand, for the Grand Vizier Baltaji Mehemet, having understood that the Russian army had arrived at Jassy, immediately put his troops in march, and crossed the Danube, at the head of 100,000 men. In marching along the Pruth he deputed the Count Poniatowski to wait on the King of Sweden at Bender, and invite him to pay him a visit and inspect his army; but Charles would not condescend to such a step, but insisted upon the Grand Vizier visiting him first. On Poniatowski apologising for Charles, the Vizier, turning to the Khan of the Tartars, observed, "This is just what I expected, that the proud infidel would behave in this manner."

Peter was about the same time passing the Neister, where a council of war was held in General Bruce's tent, and Prince Cantimir's letter was read. The Tzar declared his intention to march forward to meet the enemy, without waiting the junction of the rest of the troops; all the generals expressed their approbation of the measure, except General Hallard, who said nothing. The Tzar observing his silence, ordered him to declare his sentiments, and to give his opinion freely; the general replied, that, as the council were so unanimous, he never would have made any objection, had not his Majesty insisted on his declaring his sentiments; he then frankly told the Tzar he was very much surprised that the King of Sweden's misfortune did not serve as a sufficient warning; for that prince had been misled by the advice of

the traitor Mazeppa, and he could not help thinking their present state was a similar one. The Prince of Moldavia, he said, has already disappointed us, and, for any security we have, the Prince of Wallachia may do the same; for although he should mean well himself, yet he may want the power to serve us; for it is to be feared his troops, who have long been used to the Turkish government, will not enter into his sentiments *.

The general was but too good a prophet. The march, however, was resolved on; "and we set out," says Captain Bruce, "the same night, to avoid the intense heat of the day, and continued to march for three nights through a barren desert heath, without a drop of water all the way, which was severely felt both by man and beast. On the 18th June, we arrived at the river Pruth, where we lost a number of our baggage horses by their drinking too plentifully of the water. We passed the river on the 19th, near Jassy, the capital and residence of the Prince of Moldavia. At this place Prince Cantimir joined us in person with very few attendants, both the Wallachian and Moldavian troops having left him for fear of the Turks. We continued our march down the Pruth till the 21st, when we met a prodigious swarm of locusts, which, at their rising, overshadowed the whole army, like a cloud; they had not only destroyed the grass of the fields, but also the tender bark and leaves of the trees: here again we lost a number of our carriage cattle for want of forage. It was very remarkable that the locusts never left

* Bruce's Memoirs.

our army, and we no sooner pitched our tents than they came down and covered the whole camp. We tried, by firing of cannon and small arms, and burning trains of powder on the ground, to drive them away, but all in vain; they attended us on our march along the river, till the 27th, when we discovered the Turkish army crossing the Pruth. Upon this, General Janus was detached, with a body of troops, and twelve pieces of cannon, to dispute their passage; but he was too late, for half their army had passed before he could get up to them, so that he found it prudent to retreat to the main body of the army. It was very surprising that we had not the least intelligence of so numerous an army, which consisted of not less than 200,000 men, till they were actually within sight of us *."

This bold manœuvre of the Turks made it necessary for the Tzar to form his line of battle, and bring them to an immediate engagement, but they kept without the range of cannon shot, endeavouring with their numerous cavalry to surround the Russians, and cut them off from the river, but in this they failed; for Peter, seeing what their intention was, ordered his troops to fall back, so as to extend along the right bank of the Pruth. The different corps of the army were all separated in the dark, and as a great number of their horses had perished, it was found expedient to burn many of their baggage-wagons, to prevent their falling into the enemy's hands. These fires sufficiently indicated to the Turks the

* Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce.

state of confusion in which the army of their opponents was, "which," says Bruce, "afforded them a fine opportunity to have destroyed our whole army, and they might easily have done it with a small part of theirs;" but, it seems, they were busily employed in entrenching themselves. At day break the Tzar collected his army, and formed it into a hollow square, the river serving for the fourth side, and the wagons were formed into an enclosure within for the protection of the ladies.

Opposite to the Russians, on the other side of the river, the Tartars of the Crimea had taken up their ground, who annoyed them so much, that whenever a party attempted to water at the river a few pieces of cannon were constantly playing upon them. Thus the Russian army was completely surrounded, by Turks on one side, and Tartars on the other, with the river Pruth between them and the latter, which operated both ways, first, as an advantage to enable them to extend their square, and prevent a junction of the two enemies' armies, and, secondly, as a disadvantage, in preventing a safe retreat for the Russians, a measure to which it was but too likely they must be driven. Peter was now, in fact, in a more critical situation than that of Charles XII. at Pultowa, hemmed in, as that prince was, by a superior army, more distressed for want of provisions, and deceived, like him, by the promises of an ally who had not the power to fulfil them.

Thus surrounded, the Turkish army attacked them for three days and for three nights, successively. "The Turkish infantry," says the Tzar,

"although in disorder, fought with great ardour; and, numerous as it was, if it had attacked our front and flanks, we should, no doubt, have been in a dangerous position; for the enemy's army infinitely surpassed in numbers our troops, which consisted only of 31,554 infantry, and 6,692 cavalry, of which the greater part was dismounted. But as they attacked us only on one side we were able to sustain this by fresh troops. Besides, having eight guns, eight-pounders, and some field-pieces, which kept up a rapid fire in aid of our musketry, a dreadful slaughter was made in this dense mass of the enemy, for the Turks since admitted that there perished in this action seven thousand men*." Bruce says nearly the same thing; but, fortunately, the enemy attacked only one side of their square at a time, which enabled them to relieve their wearied troops from time to time as they became harassed with fatigue, and it also enabled them to make use of their large train of artillery, which did great execution among them; and the more so as the Turks had not been able to bring up their artillery, except the few pieces on the opposite side of the Pruth. The Russians, however, were placed in a desperate condition; no longer able to exist in so dangerous and destructive a position, all retreat entirely cut off, the Tzar saw that nothing was left but either, by engaging in an unequal combat, to obtain a victory, to fight to the very last man, or, lastly, to surrender to the Turks. The last alternative seemed, indeed, to be the only resource; for, on

* Journal de Pierre le Grand.

the fourth day, the Tzar was informed that all their ammunition was spent to a few charges. On receiving this intelligence, Bruce says, Peter ordered all the officers of the army, with a number of select men, to mount on horseback and attend his person ; his intention being to force his way through the Turkish army in the night, and to go through Transylvania and Hungary. Bruce is an honest but a loose writer, and what he here states is highly improbable. It would be utterly inconsistent with Peter's character to have entertained, for a moment, the idea of leaving his brave soldiers, his beloved Catharine, and the rest of the ladies, to the mercies of the Turks, which must have been the case had such a plan been adopted. Bruce, no doubt, refers to a resolution of the generals at a council of war. Voltaire's account of his behaviour at this critical period is much more consistent :—

"All the relations," says this historian, "and memoirs of the times unanimously agree that the Tzar, fluctuating in his mind whether he should renew the engagement the next day with the enemy, and expose his wife, his army, and his empire, and the fruit of all his labours, to a danger which seemed almost insuperable, returned to his tent oppressed with anxiety, and labouring under convulsions, to which he was sometimes subject, and which his present solicitude contributed to increase. Thus resigning himself a prey to the most torturing disquietude, and unwilling that his distracted condition should be known, he gave orders that no one should be permitted to enter

his tent. Then it was that he experienced the good effect of having permitted his wife to accompany him in this expedition. Catharine entered his tent notwithstanding his prohibition *."

Whether the resolution taken by this true heroine, who had faced death during all these engagements, who had rarely left the side of her husband, was with that husband's consent, as Voltaire would intimate,—or whether Bruce, who agrees in what most writers, previous to the appearance of his memoirs, have stated, be right in supposing it to have been taken unknown to her husband, and in consequence of the hopeless condition of the Russian army,—is not very material. It is agreed, on all hands, that Catharine, foreseeing the hazard that would attend any further attempt or delay, and the loss and disgrace that were likely to fall on her husband's arms and army, hit on an expedient, which saved the honour of the one, and averted the inevitable destruction of the other. She knew that an oriental prince or his representative never grants an audience without the offer of a present. She therefore got together the few jewels and trinkets she had brought with her in this expedition, and went round the camp, to collect all the money, plate, and jewels, in addition to her own, for which she gave her own receipt and obligation to pay the respective owners on her return to Moscow; and, having thus acquired a valuable present, she despatched the Vice-Chancellor Shaffirof and an officer with a letter from

* Voltaire.

Marshal Scherematof to the grand vizier; and the result was, after some negociation, the concluding a treaty of peace.

Peter in his journal takes notice of the letter, but makes no mention of Catharine's negociation; but there can be no doubt of the fact, which indeed is alluded to in his own declaration, when in 1723 he caused the Empress Catharine to be crowned. "She has been," he then said, "of great assistance to us in all times of danger, but particularly at the battle of the Pruth, where our army was reduced to two and twenty thousand men." If there be no error in the Tzar's estimate, the battle of the Pruth must have been one of the most destructive on record. He tells us that on the first day of the engagement, his army consisted of 31,554 infantry, and 6,692 cavalry; he must therefore have lost on the Pruth 16,246 fighting men. In the same journal we are assured that the loss of the Turks exceeded his: for as their attacks were made in a confused and tumultuous manner, and his men stood firm, all their shot told *.

The overture for peace was not, however, immediately accepted. No answer being received from the grand vizier for some hours, it was apprehended the bearers of the letter had been killed or detained by the Turks; a second officer was therefore despatched with a duplicate of the letter, and in the meantime a council of war was held at which Catharine assisted; the result was as follows, and signed by ten general officers:—

* Journal de Pierre le Grand.

"Should the vizier not accept of the considerations offered; should he insist on our laying down our arms, and surrendering at discretion; it is the unanimous opinion of all the generals and ministers that an attempt be made for breaking through the enemy." In consequence of this resolution a trench was thrown up round the baggage, and the Russians had advanced within a hundred paces of the Turkish army, when at length the grand vizier proclaimed a suspension of arms.

It was not altogether the precarious position of the Russian army on the Pruth that determined the vizier's assent to a cessation of arms; he had received intelligence just then that the corps commanded by General Renne on the river Sireth, in Moldavia, had advanced close to the Danube, where he had taken the town and castle of Brahilow and laid them in ashes; he knew, too, that the Tzar had also another body of troops advancing from the frontiers of Poland. The object of the Vizier was therefore to send back to Russia the victorious troops on the Danube, to recover Azoph, to exclude the Tzar from all entrance into the Palus Mœotis and the Black Sea, and to demolish the harbour of Taganroc; to prevent the Tzar, in future, from concerning himself with the Poles and the Cossacks, and to obtain for the King of Sweden a free and undisturbed passage home to his own kingdom. These were the terms he proposed, to all of which the Tzar agreed; and the Vice-Chancellor Shaffirof and Major-General Scherematof, son of the Marshal, were sent to Constantinople as hostages for the fulfilment of the treaty. After

which the whole army was supplied by the Turks with abundance of provisions.

The vizier pressed very much that Prince Cantimir should be delivered up to him, as Patkul had been by Augustus to the King of Sweden, but this was disdainfully rejected by the Tzar. In his letter to Vice-Chancellor Shaffirof he thus expresses himself: "I will rather cede to the Turks all the country as far as Cursk; I shall still have some hopes of recovering it; but my word once forfeited, is irrecoverable—it must not be violated. Honour is all we have peculiar to ourselves, renouncing that is ceasing to be a monarch."

Peter in his journal admits that this expedition against the Turks was very rashly undertaken; that he first set about it for the honour of Christianity and on the promises of the faithless Hospodar of Moldavia,—promises that were only the words of Judas—a man who betrayed him to the Turks and laid a snare for his destruction; "but," says he, "divine justice most certainly performed a miracle on the occasion, in saving us from that inevitable danger;" and he adds that, "by the effect of this same divine justice, all the traitors came to an unhappy end *."

"The King of Sweden," says Voltaire, "was now reduced to the mean shift of caballing at the Ottoman court. A king who had made kings is busied in contriving means that memoirs and petitions, which the ministry would not receive, might be delivered to the Sultan. All the artifices

* Journal de Pierre le Grand.

and intrigues which a subject would make use of to supplant a minister in his sovereign's esteem, Charles practised against the Vizier Mehemet, and all his successors. Sometimes application was made to the Sultan Validé by a Jewess; sometimes an eunuch was the messenger; at last was found a wretch who, mingling himself among the grand seignor's guards, acted the madman with the view that, by drawing the notice of the sultan, he might give him a memorial from the king. But the result of all these decrees was, that Charles had the mortification to see himself deprived of his *thaim*, or pension, which he daily received from the Porte's generosity, amounting to fifteen hundred livres, French. The grand vizier, instead of the *thaim*, transmitted him an order, in the softened form of advice, to quit Turkey."

"Charles," he continues, "was more determined than ever to stay, still flattering himself that he should lead an Ottoman army into Poland, and Russia. The issue of his obstinacy, in the year 1714, is known to all the world; how with his secretaries, valets, cooks and grooms, he fought against an army of janissaries, Spahis and Tartars; how he was a prisoner in the country where he had enjoyed the most generous hospitality; and how, after a stay of five years in Turkey, he returned to his own kingdom in the disguise of a courier. If there was any rationality in his conduct, it must be owned to have been of a different kind from that of other men*." "I see," said Peter with a deep sigh, on hearing of his

* Voltaire. Life of Charles XII.

conduct towards the Turks, "I see that God has abandoned him, since he carries his ingratitude so far as to attack his benefactors *." In plain truth, the whole conduct of Charles, after the battle of Pultowa, was that of a madman.

The spot, where Peter was engaged in this destructive battle, was not more than sixty or seventy miles from Bender, where his rival brother, Charles XII., had taken up his abode; and it is well authenticated that there were in the Ottoman army, in the midst of the battle, two of the King of Sweden's officers, Count Poniatowski and General Sparre; that these generals strongly urged the grand vizier not to fight, but continually to harass the Russians; to cut them off from all water and supplies of provisions, and thus oblige them either to surrender or to perish; but that the vizier was determined to bring the point to the issue of a battle, the result of which he could not doubt, from the vast superiority of his numbers; that they still pressed him not to hazard a general action with troops, however inferior in numbers, which were so superior to his in discipline; and that the vizier got angry, which was the chief cause of his attacking the Russians the first day in the rear, under General Allard, who, with 8000 men, stood his ground for three hours against 150,000 Turks, and obliged them to retire, with the loss of 7000 men. Such was the effect of discipline acquired since the battle of Narva, where the Russian soldiers were no better than, and probably not so good as, those of the Turks †.

* Life of Peter the Great. † Journal de Pierre le Grand.

As soon as the treaty was concluded, Charles hastened to the vizier, who, recollecting his haughtiness at Bender *, sent two pashas to meet him, but received him himself near the door of his tent. Charles commenced the conversation by upbraiding him for not taking the Tzar prisoner, when he had him in his power; but the vizier coolly asked, "Had I taken the Tzar, who would have governed his empire?" adding, "All kings should not leave their homes." This, if true, would have been sufficiently mortifying to Charles; but the conversation that passed is more probably stated by Bruce. After reproaching the vizier for not taking the Tzar a prisoner to Constantinople, Charles said that, if he would now give him 20,000 of his troops, he would yet recover the opportunity. "God preserve us," says the vizier, "from breaking a treaty of peace without any reason, as I have already accepted hostages for the performance of it." Poniatowski being present, repeated the same thing, but the vizier was inflexible, and observed it would be a violation of that part of the treaty which provides, "That the King of Sweden may return into his own dominions, through the Tzar's territories, with a strong convoy of Turks, after which, if he pleases, he may make peace with the Tzar. The king, on hearing this, looked full at the grand vizier and laughed in his face, without making any answer; and turning short on his heel, tore the vizier's robe with his spur, mounted his horse, and rode off highly displeased with the interview †."

* Journal de Pierre le Grand. † Bruce's Memoirs.

"Thus," says Voltaire, "all the satisfaction Charles reaped from his long journey was, to tear the grand vizier's robe with one of his spurs; whereas the vizier, who might have made him repent of this indignity, overlooked it, and herein showed himself much greater than Charles. If amidst the blaze and tumult of this monarch's life, anything could have brought him to see how much grandeur is subject to the reverse of fortune, it is, that at Pultowa a pastry-cook had made his whole army lay down their arms; and that at the Pruth, both the Tzar's fate and his own had been decided by a wood-cleaver — this Vizier Baltagi Mehemet having been a wood-cleaver in the seraglio, as his name signifies; and, instead of being ashamed of it, he accounted it an honour. So different are the Eastern manners from ours*."

Bruce, who was sent express to Constantinople, relates the following melancholy story: "At our setting out (from the Pruth) Colonel Pitt had the misfortune to lose both his wife and daughter, beautiful women, by the breaking of their coach-wheel; by this accident they were left so far in the rear, that the Tartars seized and carried them off. The colonel addressed himself to the grand vizier, who ordered a strict inquiry to be made, but to no purpose. The colonel, being afterwards informed that they were both carried to Constantinople, and presented to the grand seignior, obtained a pass, and went thither in search of them; and, getting acquainted with a Jew doctor, who was physician to the seraglio, the doctor told him there had been two such ladies as he

* Voltaire's Hist.

described lately presented to the sultan; but that when any of the sex were once taken into the seraglio, they were never suffered to come out again. The colonel, nevertheless, tried every expedient he could devise to recover his wife, if he could not get both, till, becoming outrageous by repeated disappointment, and very clamorous, they shut him up in a dungeon; and it was with great difficulty he got released, by the intercession of some of the foreign ambassadors at the Porte; and he was afterwards told, by the Jew doctor, that they had both died of the plague *."

These barbarians had too long been suffered to act as the scourge of Southern Europe, but Russia was the power destined, at no great distance of time, to wipe off the disgrace by the most ample vengeance.

* Bruce's Memoirs.

CHAPTER X.

The Tzar's Naval Victory over the Swedes—Rejoicings—A Russian Entertainment—Death of the Consort of Alexis—The Tzarina Catharine brings Peter a Son—Strange Rejoicings—Progressive Improvements at Petersburg.

As soon as intelligence of the treaty with Russia had reached Constantinople, the Vizier's conduct was highly applauded, and great rejoicings, by order of the Sultan, took place. Tolstoy, the Russian ambassador, was immediately released from the Seven Towers, and Shaffirof and Scherematof, the two hostages, were received with such honours as the Turk ever condescends to bestow upon infidels, and a guard of Janissaries given for their protection.

Peter, on his part, lost no time in ordering his army to march back by the way of Jassy, followed by a large body of Turkish troops, which were sent by the Vizier, most probably to watch the motions of the Muscovites, though ostensibly to hinder the roving Tartars from molesting them. Conformable with the terms of the treaty, Peter caused, without delay, the fortresses of Samara and Kamienska to be demolished; but it required a considerable time to prepare for the surrender of Azoph and Taganroc, owing to the separation of the stores and vessels belonging to the Turks, and those that had been sent thither by the Russians subsequent to the capture. The Sultan grew

impatient at the delay, and dismissed the Vizier. Now again the party of Charles, supported by the Khan of the Tartars, and by the French ambassador, once more gained the ascendant, and there seemed to be every likelihood of a renewal of hostilities. Azoph, however, was at length restored, and the fortresses demolished; yet the grand seignior was persuaded that he ought not to be satisfied with the treaty. Peter, therefore, thought it most politic, under present circumstances, to authorise his ambassador to sign another treaty, by which he consented to withdraw his troops from Poland within three months; but at the same time he stipulated that Charles should be required immediately to withdraw from Turkey and return to his own dominions, instead of remaining there to foment broils among Christian powers.

Peter, on his return from this unfortunate campaign, found his health so much impaired, that he thought it necessary to proceed to Carlsbad, to drink the waters; and from hence he issued his orders for attacking the Swedish province of Pomerania, and to blockade Stralsund; being determined to leave no part of Germany in the possession of the Crown of Sweden. From Carlsbad he proceeded to Dresden, where his son, the Tzarovitz Alexis Petrovitz, at this time in his twenty-second year, was waiting his arrival. They went together to Targow, where preparations had been made for the marriage of Alexis with the Princess of Wolfenbuttel, sister to the Empress of Germany, consort of Charles VI., an accomplished young lady of eighteen years of age. The marriage was celebrated in the palace of the Queen

of Poland. The object which Peter would seem to have had in view, in promoting this alliance, was the hope of bringing back this unfortunate son to a sense of what he owed to himself, as the legitimate successor to the throne, and to his father, to whom he had been guilty of every species of disobedience. Captain Bruce says, the Tzarovitz was entirely given up to low sensual pleasures and mean vicious company, and had no desire at all to marry; nor had any other view at present than an endeavour to shun the danger he was in of forfeiting his succession to the crown; and the princess, whose amiable manners and engaging accomplishments deserved a better fate, entirely missed her road to happiness *.

Catharine was not at the marriage, having been left at Thorn. Though considered fully as the legitimate Tzarina, she had not been formally acknowledged as such, and German pride, or the German ceremonial, might not have allowed her a place suitable to her dignity as the spouse of Peter; and as his Majesty was exceedingly punctilious on this point, he deemed it most expedient to avoid any question being mooted on the subject, and that the Tzarina should not be present. After the ceremony he joined Catharine at Thorn, and they then proceeded, by the way of Elbing, Konigsberg, Mittaw and Riga, to Petersburg, where they arrived on the 29th of December, 1711. One of the first steps which Peter took after his arrival at his new capital, was to declare his intention to celebrate anew his own marriage, which he had publicly announced at Moscow and

* Memoir of P. H. Bruce.

to the army. Accordingly, on the 26th of February, 1712, *his Majesty's old wedding* was solemnised, with great splendour and rejoicing, with fireworks and illuminations.

These rejoicings being concluded, Peter, with his usual activity, employed himself in forwarding his various plans and improvements; new ships were launched, and others laid down; the Admiralty was extended; the foundery for casting cannon was finished; canals were planned and ordered to be dug; new roads were opened; warehouses were built; an exchange planned; and encouragement held out for the building of dwelling-houses of a more substantial kind than those hitherto constructed. He directed that the Senate should be removed from Moscow to Petersburg; and it became obvious that his design was to make the latter the capital of the empire.

But as the prosperity and permanent security of this new city would mainly depend on still further humbling Sweden, he determined to carry the war into that country, with the view of stripping her of every possession that could annoy or endanger St. Petersburg. While Charles, with his habitual pride and obstinacy, was quarrelling with the Turks at Bender, on whose charity he was subsisting, Peter had formed a league with Denmark and Saxony, and their united armies entered Pomerania. Menzikoff, with 30,000 men, was ordered to join the allied army, and Peter set out with the Tzarina, and proceeded to Stralsund, which he blockaded with a large force; having left also 10,000 men before Stettin. Count Steinbock, who now commanded the Swedish army of 11,000

or 12,000 men, marched along the Wismar road, following the combined troops of Russia, Saxony, and Denmark. He soon came up with the Danish and Saxon armies, the Russians being three leagues behind. The Tzar despatched couriers to the King of Denmark, desiring him on no account to engage the Swedes until his troops could be brought up; but the Dane, not willing to share the honour of a victory, of which he had made himself secure, attacked them near a place called Gadebusch, and was completely beaten before the Russians could reach the field of battle.

Steinbock was a brave and intelligent officer, but a man totally destitute of feeling, and as obstinate and obdurate as his master. Fresh from his victory at Gadebusch, he proceeded to the little town of Altona, situated close to the city of Hamburg, a place inhabited by a peaceable people, who obtained a livelihood generally by the exercise of different branches of trades and manufactures, and who had never taken up arms on one side or the other; notwithstanding which, he set fire to the town in the night, and reduced it to a heap of ashes. Many of the innocent inhabitants perished in the flames, and others, especially the aged, the infirm, and the children, who had fled from the conflagration, died with fatigue and cold at the gates of Hamburg. The Tzar pursued Steinbock closely, and having witnessed the wretched condition of the poor people, whose town had been wantonly destroyed, he ordered some thousand rubles to be distributed among them. Steinbock had halted his army at Frederickstadt; but the Tzar, putting himself at the head of five battalions of

his guards, and some cavalry, attacked him so vigorously that he retreated with the main body of his army to Tonningen. After this the Russian army went into winter quarters, and the Tzar returned to Petersburg.

The whole of the year 1713 was spent in battles and sieges of various places in Pomerania, and in the intrigues of the most cunning and unprincipled self-created diplomatist and negociator that ever existed—the famous Baron Goertz, whom Voltaire designates as the most crafty and most enterprising of men. This man, never at a loss for resources, thought nothing too bold, nothing too difficult; insinuating in negociations and daring in his schemes—indifferent as to truth or falsehood—he had the address to impose on Peter, on Charles, on the Kings of Denmark, Saxony, and Prussia. It was by his advice that Tonningen had opened its gates to the Swedish army, at the same time he assured the King of Denmark it was done contrary to his advice: but this did not save the Swedish general, Steinbock, from being obliged to surrender himself prisoner of war, with eleven thousand men. It was agreed that Steinbock with his officers and men might be ransomed or exchanged. His ransom was settled at eight thousand imperial crowns; yet, inconsiderable as this sum was, that general, for want of it, remained a prisoner at Copenhagen until his death.

Before the close of the year 1713, the Elector of Hanover had secured Bremen and Verden, of which the Swedes had been dispossessed; the Saxons had sat down before their city of Wismar; Stettin had passed into the hands of the King of

Prussia; finally, the Saxons were in possession of the Island of Rugen, preparatory to the Russians besieging Stralsund, almost the only spot in Pomerania now left to Charles XII. In the midst of these negociations and partitions, the Tzar having himself dictated the plan of the siege of Stralsund, left the rest to Menzikoff and the confederates, and returned to Petersburg, where he embarked in a ship of 50 guns, built from a model of his own, and made sail for Helsingfors in the gulf of Finland, followed by 93 galleys, 60 brigantines, and 50 large flat-boats, with sixteen thousand land-forces *. Great difficulty and no little danger, on account of rocks and shoals, were experienced; but the Tzar, in the capacity of rear-admiral, overcame them all. He caused a diversion to be made on one part, while the troops landed on the other and captured the town. From hence the Tzar pushed on and made himself master of Borgo and Abo, and the whole line of coast. Abo, the capital of Finland, had an university and a considerable library, which Peter took possession of and sent to Petersburg, where a suitable building was put in preparation for its reception; and this was the foundation of the present library at Petersburg. The Tzar returned to the northern capital, leaving the command of his troops with Prince Galitzin, who advanced against the Swedes, drove them from Tavarthus, and pursued them to the neighbourhood of the lake Palkane, forcing them to abandon their cannon and baggage.

Peter did not remain long at his new capital.

* Journal de Pierre le Grand.

Finding that the Swedes were making great efforts to arrest his progress in the gulf of Finland, and that a considerable squadron was fitting out under the orders of Admiral Watrang and Vice-Admiral Ehrenschild, he lost not a moment in assembling his fleet at Cronstadt. It consisted of thirty stout ships, most of them built in England or Holland, which he ordered from Revel to join the squadron of galleys and prames, so called by the Tzar, which amounted to 70 or 80. Admiral Apraxin was appointed commander-in-chief, and Peter served under him as rear-admiral. They set sail from Cronstadt, and after cruising about and collecting the fleet, they fell in with that of Sweden, consisting of eighteen or twenty large ships of the line, under the orders of Admiral Ehrenschild. Peter, being aware that the large ships of the Swedes could not approach near enough to the island of Aland, on account of the numerous rocks and shoals, and being superior to the enemy in small vessels, determined on landing on the island, which he effected in sight of the Swedish fleet, and under fire of their cannon. Ehrenschild, in a frigate, led on his galleys to attack those of Peter, who was prepared to receive them, and poured in upon them so destructive a fire, as to cause a dreadful slaughter among the crews. The Elephant, a small frigate of 18 guns, which bore the flag of the Swedish admiral, was taken, after a gallant action, which lasted two hours, by boarding, together with nine large galleys and several prames, carrying altogether 116 guns. The Swedish admiral jumped into a boat and endeavoured to escape, but he was pursued, and,

being wounded, was obliged to surrender. He was brought on board the galley which the Tzar himself commanded in the action. The number of killed was 352, and of prisoners 950; the number of killed and wounded on the side of the Russians was 342. The large ships escaped to Sweden; but such was the consternation, that even Stockholm was alarmed for its safety *.

This action was glorious to Peter and his navy. To have himself thus triumphed over the old and skilful Swedish officers, and made that fleet, which for so long a time had scoured the whole Baltic Sea, flee before him, could not fail to gratify his most ardent hopes, while it raised his reputation for skill in naval affairs, and made him more than ever respected by his allies. He returned to Petersburg, where an addition to his joy awaited his arrival, by the Tzarina's safe delivery of a princess, who died, however, about a year after. He celebrated the birth of his daughter by a triumphal entry into his new capital, and instituted a new order in honour of his consort, called the Order of St. Catharine, to perpetuate the memory of that love and fidelity which she had always manifested for him, and more especially in his distressed and critical situation, when his army was surrounded by the Turks and Tartars on the banks of the Pruth. The decoration of the order is a medal, encircled with precious stones, surrounding the picture of St. Catharine, with the motto "For Love and Fidelity." The Tzarina could alone bestow it on such of her own sex as she might think proper; and the first who had it

* Journal de Pierre le Grand.

were her own two daughters, the Princess Anne, afterwards married to the Duke of Holstein, and the Princess Elizabeth, afterwards Empress of Russia; shortly after she bestowed it on the Tzar's three nieces—Anne, Catharine and Paskovia, the daughters of his brother John, and also on the Princess Menzikoff.

All the galleys of the conquerors and conquered came up the Neva, opposite the senate-house and the fort, amidst the roar of cannon; after which the men came ashore and marched in grand procession to the senate-house. When his Majesty reached a triumphal arch, all the grandees, senators, and foreign ministers congratulated him on his victory. The governor of Moscow, in the name of the country, complimented his Majesty on his gallant conduct, and thanked him for his great and eminent services. Among the emblematical representations which adorned the magnificent arch, was the Russian eagle seizing an elephant (in allusion to Ehrenschild's ship), with this inscription, "*Aquila non capit muscas.*" The procession proceeded in the same order to the fort, where the Vice-Tzar, Romanonofsky, seated on a throne and surrounded by the senate, caused Rear-Admiral Peter to be called before the assembly, and received from him a report in writing of the gallant action he had fought; which being read and considered, he was unanimously declared Vice-Admiral of Russia, which being proclaimed in the assembly, the whole house resounded with "Health to the Vice-Admiral." Peter, having returned thanks, immediately went on board his galley and hoisted the flag of the Vice-Admiral.

After this his Majesty, attended by numbers of the nobility and officers, went to the palace of Prince Menzikoff, where a grand entertainment was provided. When the dinner was ended, the Tzar, who had showed a marked attention to Vice-Admiral Ehrenschild, addressing the company, said,—"Gentlemen, you here see a brave and a faithful servant of his master, who has made himself worthy of the highest rewards at his hands, and who shall always have my favour while he is with me, although he has killed me many a brave man. I forgive you," said he, turning to the Swede, with a smile, "and you may always depend on my good will." Ehrenschild, having thanked the Tzar, replied, "However honourably I may have acted with regard to my master, I did no more than my duty: I sought death, but did not meet it; and it is no small comfort to me, in my misfortune, to be a prisoner of your Majesty, and to be treated so favourably, and with so much distinction, by so great a sea-officer and, now worthily, Vice-Admiral."

The Tzar, on this occasion, addressed the following speech to the assembled senators, many of whom had not been very favourable to his views of reform, nor to the great expense occasioned by maintaining a fleet:—

"My brethren, where is the man among you, who, twenty years ago, would have conceived the idea of being engaged along with myself in building ships here on the Baltic, and in settling in these regions, conquered by our fatigues and bravery?—of living to see so many brave and victorious soldiers and seamen sprung from Rus-

sian blood,—and to see our sons returning home accomplished men from foreign countries? Historians place the seat of all sciences in Greece; whence being expelled by the fatality of the times, they spread into Italy, and thence were dispersed all over Europe; but, by the perverseness of our ancestors, they stopped short in Poland. The Poles as well as the Germans formerly groped in the same darkness in which we have hitherto lived, but the indefatigable care of their governors at length opened their eyes, and they made themselves masters of those arts, sciences, and social improvements, which Greece once boasted of. It is now our turn, if you will only seriously second my designs, and add to your obedience voluntary knowledge. I can compare this transmigration of the sciences to nothing better than the circulation of the blood in the human body; and my mind almost prognosticates that they will, some time or other, quit their abode in Britain, France, and Germany, to come and settle, for some centuries, among us; and afterwards, perhaps, return to their original home in Greece. In the meantime, I earnestly recommend to your practice the Latin saying, *Ora et labora;* and in that case, be persuaded, you may chance, even in your own lifetime, to put other civilised nations to the blush, and raise the glory of the Russian name to the highest pitch*."

The senators and the whole assembly applauded this speech. A round of entertainments were now given by the superior officers of the government; from all which the Tzarovitz thought fit to absent

* Voltaire. Nestesuranoi. Mottley, &c.

himself, though regularly invited by General Bruce, "who," says Captain Bruce, "sent me several times to inform him of his Majesty's displeasure at his non-appearance; but the old excuse—want of health,—served on every occasion." It seems that this wayward young man, to avoid appearing in public, either took physic or let blood, always making an excuse that his want of health would not allow him to attend; "when, at the same time," says Bruce, "it was notorious that he got drunk in very bad company, where he used constantly to condemn all his father's actions. On the present occasion, by way of punishment, the Tzar ordered him, being only a serjeant of grenadiers, to take his place on the right, with his halbert on his shoulder, when a company of that regiment was ordered to attend one of these entertainments. The princess, his consort, happening to see him from a window march past, as she thought, in a degraded situation, was taken ill, and fainted. The Tzar, or hearing this, immediately went to her, explained to her that he himself had gone through the lowest ranks of both land and sea service, till he reached what he now was, a general in the one, and a vice-admiral in the other; but he told her, with his usual good nature, that he had just procured for him, from the Vice-Tzar, an ensign's commission in the guards, and that he came to give her joy on her husband's promotion.

The Tzar was so delighted with his sea-victory, and so fully satisfied with the great importance of establishing a naval force on a grand scale, that he ordered several ships of the line to be laid down

immediately, so that, in the spring of the year 1715, he might have a fleet of fifty large ships, with an increased number of galleys and other vessels, to enable him to make a descent on Sweden, and even flattered himself he should be able to take Stockholm. It is incredible with what rapidity a ship of the line, from a thousand to twelve hundred tons, was run up and completed for launching; several of them were fully equipped in the course of a twelvemonth.

Petersburg now began to assume the consequence as well as the appearance of a great capital; and vast numbers flocked thither from Moscow, and other interior towns, seeing that the seat of commerce would eventually be established there. The Tzar had now become almost universally popular. Desirous of assimilating the manners of his subjects, as he had already done their dress, to those of other European nations, he encouraged frequent social assemblies: he even ordered his senators and his generals alternately to open their houses twice a week for these assemblies, at which conversation, cards, and dancing might be resorted to; they were to commence at eight and end at eleven o'clock; they were open to all of the rank of gentlemen, foreigners as well as natives, and equally so for their wives and daughters. This was a great step gained in civilisation; and the ladies gladly profited by the indulgence, and rapidly improved in their manners, conversation, and dress.

The balls and entertainments of the Tzar had hitherto always been given at Prince Menzikoff's palace, but his own summer and winter palaces

being finished in the course of the year 1715, he now entertained his guests at one or other of these; except on grand festivals, and extraordinary occasions, when the entertainments were held at the senate-house. At these public dinners, several tables were laid out, appropriated to the several classes of persons, as senators, clergymen, officers of the army and navy, merchants, ship-builders and others; the Tzarina and the ladies at a separate table, and generally above stairs. These entertainments commonly ended with hard drinking. After dinner the Tzar used to go from one room and table to another, conversing with every set according to their different professions or employments, more particularly with the masters of foreign trading vessels, making minute inquiries into the several branches of their traffic, and marking down in his pocket-book, as usual, whatever occurred to him as worthy of notice. "At these dinners," says Bruce, "I have seen the Dutch skippers treat him with much familiarity, calling him *Skipper Peter*, with which he seemed to be highly delighted *."

But the most extraordinary account of the manner in which the Tzar entertained is given in a manuscript, in the hand-writing of Dr. Birch, among the Sloane Papers in the British Museum:—

"There are twenty-four cooks belonging to the kitchen of the Russian court, who are all Russians; and, as people of that nation use a great deal of onion, garlic, and train oyl, in dressing their meat, and employ linseed and walnut oyl for their provisions, there is such an intolerable stink in their kitchen, that no stranger is able to bear it,

* Memoir of P. H. Bruce, Esq.

especially the cooks being such nasty fellows that the very sight of them is enough to turn one's stomach. These are the men who, in great festivals, dress about 70 or 80 or more dishes. But the fowls which are for the Czar's own eating are very often dressed by his grand *Marskal* Alseffiof, who is running up and down with his apron before him among the other cooks till it is time to take up dinner, when he puts on his fine clothes, and his full-bottomed wig, and helps to serve up the dishes.

" The number of the persons invited is commonly two or three hundred, though there is room for no more than about an hundred, at four or five tables. But as there is no place assigned to any body, and none of the Russians are willing to go home with an empty stomach, every body is obliged to seize his chair and hold it with all his force, if he will not have it snatched from him.

" The Czar being come in, and having chosen a place for himself, there is such scuffling and fighting for chairs, that nothing more scandalous can be seen in any country. Though the Czar does not mind in the least, nor take care for putting a stop to such disorder, pretending that a ceremony, and the formal regulations of a *Marskal*, make company eat uneasy, and spoil the pleasure of conversation. Several foreign ministers have complained of this to the Czar, and refused to dine any more at court. But all the answer they got was, that it was not the Czar's business to turn master of the ceremonies and please foreigners, nor was it his intention to

abolish the freedom once introduced. This obliged strangers for the future to follow the Russian fashion, in defending the possession of their chairs by cuffing and boxing their opposer.

" The company thus sitting down to table without any manner of grace, they all sit so crowded together that they have much ado to lift their hands to their mouths. And if a stranger happens to sit between two Russians, which is commonly the case, he is sure of losing his stomach, though he should have happened to have ate nothing for two days before. Carpenters and shipwrights sit next to the Czar, but senators, ministers, generals, priests, sailors, buffoons of all kinds, sit pell-mell without any distinction.

" The first course consists of nothing but cold meats, among which are hams, dried tongues, and the like, which not being liable to such tricks, as shall be mentioned hereafter, strangers ordinarily make their whole meal of them, without tasting anything else, though, generally speaking, every one takes his dinner beforehand at home.

" Soups and roasted meats make the second course, and pastry the third.

" As soon as one sits down, one is obliged to drink a cup of brandy; after which they ply you with great glasses full of adulterated *tookay*, and other vitiated wines, and between whiles a bumper of the strongest English beer, by which mixture of liquors every one of the guests is fuddled before the soup is served up.

" The company being in this condition make such a noise, racket and halloing, that it is impossible to hear one another, or even to hear the

musick which is playing in the next room, consisting of a sort of trumpets and *corpets*, (for the Czar hates violins,) and with this revelling noise and uproar the Czar is extremely diverted, particularly if the guests fall to boxing and get bloody noses.

" Formerly the company had no napkins given them: but instead of it they had a piece of very coarse linen given them by a servant, who brought in the whole piece under his arm, and cut off half an ell for every person, which they were at liberty to carry home with them: for it had been observed that these pilfering guests used constantly to pocket the napkins. But at present two or three Russians must make shift with but one napkin, which they pull and haul for, like hungry dogs for a bone.

" Each person of the company has but one plate during dinner; so if some Russian does not care to mix the sauces of the different dishes together, he pours the soup, that is left in his plate, either into the dish, or into his neighbour's plate, or even under the table; after which he licks his plate clean with his finger, and last of all wipes it with the table cloth.

" The tables are each 30 or 40 feet long, and but two and a half broad. Three or four *messes* of one and the same course are served up to each table. The dessert consists of divers sorts of pastry and fruits, but the Czarina's table is furnished with sweetmeats. However, it is to be observed, that these sweetmeats are only set out on great festivals, for a show, and that the Russians of the best fashion have nothing for their dessert but the

produce of the kitchen garden (as peas, beans, &c.,) all raw.

" At great entertainments it frequently happens that nobody is allowed to go out of the room from noon till midnight. Hence it is easy to imagine what pickle a room must be in, that is full of people who drink like beasts, and none of them escape being dead drunk.

" They often tie eight or ten young mice on a string, and hide them under green pease, or in such soups as the Russians have the greatest appetites to; which sets them a *kecking* and vomiting in a most beastly manner, when they come to the bottom and discover the trick. They often bake cats, wolves, ravens and the like in their pastries, and when the company have eat them up, they tell them what stuff they have in their guts.

" The present butler is one of the Czar's buffoons, to whom he has given the name of *Wiaschi*, with this privilege, that if any body else calls him by that name, he has leave to drub them with his wooden sword. If therefore any body, upon the Czar's setting them on, calls out *Wiaschi*, as the fellow does not know exactly who it was, he falls a beating them all round, beginning with Prince Mentzicoff, and ending with the last of the company, without excepting even the ladies, whom he strips of their head clothes, as he does the old Russians with their wigs, which he tramples upon. On which occasion it is pleasant enough to see the variety of their bald pates.

" Besides this employment at entertainments the said Wiaschi is also surveyor of the *ice*, and

executioner for torturing people ; on which occasion he gives them the knout himself, and his dexterity in this business has already procured him about thirty thousand thalers, the sixth part of the confiscated estates of the sufferers being his perquisite*."

At what time these extraordinary scenes occurred, there are no means of ascertaining, as the paper is without date ; but the mention of the Tzarina's name points to a period subsequent to the marriage of Catharine. It is well known that Peter, simple and abstemious in his diet as he became towards the latter part of his life, as well as in the use of wine and strong liquors, never ceased to take pleasure in seeing his guests enjoy themselves, and encouraging them to drink frequently, even until they became intoxicated, and was amused with their noise and revels. When alone with his Tzarina, he was equally moderate in his eating and drinking. When only his own family was present his usual dinner hour was twelve o'clock. His table was frugal, and he ate only of plain dishes,—such as soup with vegetables in it, water gruel, cold roast meat, ham, and cheese ; a little aniseed-water before dinner, and a cup of *quass* or Russian beer, or in lieu of this, a glass of wine. One dish only was served up at a time, and, in order to have it hot, the dining-room was contiguous to the kitchen, from whence the dish was received from the cook through a small window. At one, he was accustomed to lie down and sleep

* In Dr. Birch's hand-writing. Sloane's MSS. British Museum.

for about an hour; the rest of the afternoon and the evening were spent in some amusement or other, till ten o'clock, when he went to bed, and he always got up at four in the morning, summer and winter. Between this hour and twelve he transacted all his business with his ministers. Although he never supped, he generally sat down with the Empress and his daughters at table; and, though now grown sober and serious, he still preserved in company the gaiety of his disposition, his familiarity with his inferiors, and his dislike of ceremony. Peter never restrained himself through life in putting to practice, whenever he thought it necessary, any of his oddities and eccentricities, most of which, absurd and puerile as they might appear to be, had each of them an aim at some particular end; each of them had its place on the surface of his sphere of action; and all of them converged to one central point, and that point was Russia.

Besides the coarse and boisterous parties that have been described, he had others of a more rational nature. He had a garden in Petersburg laid out on an island, in which was built a large banqueting-room. When an entertainment was to be given in this garden, it was necessary that the company should come in boats; and, in order to accommodate the different ranks of his guests, he presented them accordingly with yachts, small sailing vessels, barges of ten or twelve oars, and smaller boats; and these means of conveyance were given to them on this condition—that each should keep his vessel in repair, and when worn out, build another at his own expense. Nor were

these vessels to be kept up for pleasure alone, or suffered to remain useless; for, on a given signal being made for sailing or rowing, the proprietors, with their respective crews, were obliged to attend, whether to row on the broad Neva, or sail down to Cronstadt. In the latter case, all the manœuvres of a fleet were put in practice by signals, such as making or shortening sail, forming the line, furling sails, &c., by which the young nobles and gentry acquired a taste for the naval service, while they were enjoying the trip as an amusement.

Peter, however, in the midst of all these feasts and entertainments, conceived he had an act of justice to perform. The Dutch Admiral Kruys had, unfortunately, in the preceding year, lost two of his vessels, the Riga and the Wyberg, on the rocks, when chasing three Swedish vessels, the former of which they were obliged to set fire to. The Tzar ordered him and the captain of the other ship to be tried by court-martial, which sentenced him to be shot for neglect of duty, and cowardice. Kruys complained of the extreme severity of this doom, alleging that no other nation, conversant in naval jurisdiction, would have passed such a sentence. Some of the accounts state that the Tzar, on hearing this, ordered copies of the trial to be sent to his minister in Holland, the admiral's native country, in order to collect the opinions of the naval officers of that country; and that they pronounced the sentence to be a severe but, in strict justice, a proper one. The Tzar, however, considering his officer more unfortunate than culpable, commuted

the sentence into banishment to Olonnetz; but, before he had travelled one day's journey towards the place of his exile, his Majesty not only recalled him, but appointed him one of the commissioners of the admiralty; and thus entrusted him with the administration of the civil affairs of that navy, the ships of which he did not think fit any longer to place under his command. Accordingly he was never employed at sea again, but continued to manage the affairs of the navy on shore, which he did with great ability for the remainder of his days.

Soon after this a discovery was made, which occasioned a very considerable degree of annoyance to the Tzar. His Majesty having inquired of the Dutch merchants whether the trade of his new capital was in a flourishing state, one of them answered, it would do very well if his Majesty's ministers did not monopolise nearly the whole of it. This led to further inquiries, when it appeared that not only had trade decayed, but that the finances had been embezzled, the army ill paid, the revenues in great confusion, and that his principal servants, and among others, his favourite Menzikoff, were deeply involved. Determined to investigate the whole matter, he established a grand inquisition, at the head of which was placed General Basil Dolgorouki. Menzikoff, Admiral Apraxin, Korsakof, Vice-Governor of Petersburg, Kijkin the President, and Siniavin, First Commissioner of the Admiralty, General Bruce, Master of the Ordnance, with a great number of inferior officers, were implicated in the charges. Apraxin, Menzikoff, and Bruce, alleged their absence from

Petersburg in the field abroad, or at sea, so that they could not possibly be aware of the ill practices of their faithless servants, or prevent them. This appeal was in part admitted; but the greater part of their property was confiscated. Many others forfeited their estates, and some of these suffered in addition the knout, and those who had no property were sent to Siberia.

Another circumstance occurred shortly after this which occasioned no little grief to the Tzar. The unfortunate princess, consort of the Tzarovitz, was brought to bed of a son, and died a few days after, in the twenty-first year of her age, deeply and sincerely lamented by the whole court. By the gentleness of her manners, and the sweetness of her temper, this amiable princess had endeared herself to all who knew her; but her life had been embittered by the brutal conduct of her husband, who not only totally neglected her, but brought into the house his mistress, a Finland woman of the lowest extraction, of the name of Euphrosyne, or Afrasine, with whom and his drunken companions he spent the greater part of his time. The poor princess refused all nourishment and medicine, and entreated the physician not to force it upon her, as she had no other wish than to die in quiet. Both the Tzar and Tzarina were greatly afflicted at her loss. Their little grandson was named Peter, with the addition of Alexiovitz, and became, on the demise of the Empress Catharine, Peter II. of Russia.

The Tzar was busily employed on his works at Schlusselburg, when the intelligence of his daughter-in-law's confinement reached him: he

set out instantly for his capital, was seized with a sudden illness, which confined him to his chamber, but on hearing of her alarming state, he caused himself to be placed on a chair, moving on wheels, and conveyed to her apartment. The interview was most affecting. As she took leave of him, recommending her children to his care and her servants to his protection, this stern hero burst into tears, and, in an agony of grief, gave her the strongest assurances, which were faithfully fulfilled, that every wish of hers should be accomplished. At midnight this amiable sufferer expired.

An idle report, scarcely deserving of notice, except for that which it obtained in France, was circulated, and printed in numerous publications, that by the connivance of her attendants this unfortunate princess made her escape to Louisiana, married a French serjeant, returned with him to Paris, was discovered by Marshal Saxe, who procured her husband a commission in the Isle of Bourbon. The story included many other adventures, equally and utterly destitute of truth. It gave rise, however, to two or three impostors, who feigned themselves to be the unfortunate Princess of Wolfenbuttel, and one of them is supposed to have visited England*.

The grief of the court for the death of the princess was speedily converted into joy; for the next day after her interment, the Tzarina Catharine was brought to bed of a prince, to the unspeakable delight of the parents. This young prince was also baptized by the name of Peter, with the adjunct of

* Annual Register for 1766. Original in Gentleman's Magazine.

Petrovitz, the kings of Denmark and Prussia being his godfathers. On this joyous occasion, a kind of carnival was held, which lasted ten days. Splendid entertainments, balls, and fireworks, followed one another in constant succession. At one of the grand dinners, a device of so singular a kind is mentioned by several writers, that rude and barbarous as the subjects of Peter still were, it requires the utmost stretch of belief, that such an exhibition could have taken place. On opening a large pie, which graced the centre of the gentlemen's table, a well-shaped dwarf woman stepped out of it perfectly naked, except a head-dress; she made a speech to the company, drank their health in a glass of wine, and was then removed from the table. On the ladies' table, a man-dwarf was served out in the same manner. Mr. Bruce adds a third "dainty dish," out of which sprung a covey of twelve partridges.

Peter also took this opportunity of general rejoicing, to render the office of the patriarch, which he had long determined to abolish, and had for some years been in a state of abeyance, ridiculous; and this he did from having repeatedly received hints from the bishops and others of the wish of the people to have a patriarch, which he knew was not the case. But if so, he thought the best way of staying the popular wishes was, to make the situation contemptible. The truth is, Peter knew what sort of diversions were best suited to a people just emerging from a state of barbarism. For this purpose he appointed Sotof, his jester, or more properly, his court fool, to perform what Voltaire calls the *farce of the conclave*. This

"motley," who was in his eighty-fourth year, was created mock-patriarch; the bride (for he was to be married) was a buxom widow of thirty; the guests were invited by four stutterers, who could barely utter a word; four fat, bulky, and unwieldy fellows were selected for running footmen, so gouty as to be led by others; the bridesmen and waiters were all lame; these were meant as so many cardinals; and every member of this sacred college, according to Voltaire, was first made drunk with brandy. The happy couple were dragged to church by four bears harnessed to a sledge; and in this way, with music playing, drums beating, bears roaring, and the populace hurraing, the well-matched couple were brought to the altar, where they were joined in holy wedlock by a priest a hundred years old, deaf and blind, who was prompted in the ceremony. Voltaire observes, that Moscow and Petersburg witnessed three times the renewal of this ludicrous ceremony, which appeared to have no sort of meaning, while in reality it confirmed the people in their aversion to a church that pretended to a supreme power, and the head of which had anathematised so many potentates. "Thus the Tzar," says he, "by way of jest, revenged the cause of twenty emperors of Germany, ten kings of France, and a multitude of sovereigns *."

During this festival the principal inhabitants of Petersburg kept open house, their tables spread with cold meat and strong liquors, so that there was scarcely a sober person to be found in the whole city. On the tenth day the Tzar gave a

* History of the Russian Empire, &c.

grand entertainment at the senate-house, at the conclusion of which each guest was required to drink off a large glass called the double-eagle, containing a full bottle of wine. "To avoid this," says Captain Bruce, "I made my escape, pretending to the officer on guard, that I was going on a message from the Tzar, which he believing let me pass; I went to the house of a Mr. Kelderman, who had formerly been one of the Tzar's tutors, and was still in great favour with him. Mr. Kelderman followed me very soon, but not before he had drank off his double-eagle, and coming into his own house, he complained that he was sick with drinking; and sitting down by the table, laid his head on it, appearing as if fallen asleep. This being a common custom with him, his wife and daughters took no notice of it; till after some time observing him neither to move nor breathe, and coming close up to him, we found he was dead, which threw the family into great confusion. Knowing the esteem in which he stood with the Tzar, I went and informed him of the sudden death of Mr. Kelderman. His majesty's concern at the event brought him immediately to the house, where he condoled with the widow for the loss of her husband, ordered an honourable burial of the deceased at his own expense, and settled on her an annuity for life."

If we were to draw a conclusion, as to the manners and character of a nation, from the riotous and disgusting scenes that are exhibited by the unrestrained licentiousness that prevails in such festivities as carnivals, when full scope is given to the indulgence of the passions, we should certainly

arrive at a very unfavourable one with regard to the Russians at the time of the Tzar Peter. He has been blamed, indeed, for not having put a stop to such scenes as these; but it should be recollected, that he had already offended the nobles and the whole hierarchy by the many important changes he had made, and was still making: he had offended also the great mass of the peasantry by forcing them to part with their beards, or to pay a tax for the privilege of retaining them. He might think it, therefore, not quite prudent to forbid the use of spirituous liquors, in a climate too, where, taken in moderation, they were considered conducive to the preservation of health. Might he not, besides, have supposed that, by inflicting as a punishment what was before regarded as a pleasure, he might hope to lessen the abuse?

By the public exhibition of the mock patriarch, and the ridicule meant thereby to be thrown on the office, the Tzar was accused of intending to bring religion into contempt,—but Peter had no such intention. No man had a higher sense of the duties which religion required—no man more regularly performed those duties,—no man had a greater veneration for the deity than Peter I. of Russia. He never gained or lost a battle that he did not take the first opportunity of returning thanks to God; if for victory, ascribing the honour and glory to him alone to whom it was due; if defeat, to express his thanks for an escape from the hands of the enemy. In all his travels he never failed to attend divine service, whether Catholic, Lutheran, or Protestant,—even the Quakers' meeting-houses, as we have seen. A

little trait of his second visit to Holland will shortly be noticed, to prove that his devotion was not mere ceremony or ostentation ;—it occurred on a visit he made to the mean lodging he had occupied eighteen years before at Zaandam. Whatever faults, therefore, he might have, and they were many and great, a neglect or contempt of religious duties was not one of them.

During his stay at Petersburg, in the year 1714, and the early part of 1715, he saw his favourite new capital flourishing in a high degree. The prohibition of goods, imported at Archangel, being sent as heretofore to Moscow, drove the merchants and traders of that capital to Petersburg; the whole court also removed to the latter. Most of the houses had been built of wood, but an order was now given that all buildings should be of brick, and covered with tiles. The superb palace of Peterhoff was in progress. He employed about 40,000 people, Russian, Swedish, and Finland prisoners, in finishing his dock-yard, erecting wharfs, building ships, raising fortifications, and other works. Many of these poor people fell victims to disease, to cold, and nakedness; but the humane Catharine distributed winter clothing and money to such as were most in need of them. He built an academy, under the direction of a Frenchman named St. Hilaire, in which languages, mathematics, fencing, riding, and other matters suited to the education of a gentleman, were taught. He caused the great globe of Gottorp, which was given to him as a present by the King of Denmark, to be moved on rollers over the snow to Riga, and from thence by sea to Peters-

burg. It was made by order of the Duke of Holstein, from a design found among the papers of the celebrated Tycho Brahé, by one Andrew Bush, under the direction of Olearius. It is a large hollow sphere, eleven feet in diameter, containing a table and seats for twelve persons. The stars are distinguished according to their magnitudes, by gilded nails; the outside represents the terrestrial globe *. Peter also held out encouragement for foreign artificers and men of science to come to his capital, on promise of supplying them with houses rent-free, and exemption from all taxes for ten years. He despatched Lange, on commercial objects, over Siberia, to China; his engineers were employed in laying down maps throughout the whole empire.

At this time Petersburg was visited by two ambassadors from the east; the one from Persia, bringing with him an elephant and five lions, as presents for the Tzar; the other from Mehemet Bahadar, Khan of the Usbecks, to solicit his protection against the Tartars; such was the renown which Peter had acquired in these distant countries by his great exploits. About the same time the Donski Cossacks, who had revolted with Mazeppa, sent an embassy to make their submission, and implore pardon, which was readily granted. There was also at this time four unfortunate refugees in the new capital,—Cantimir the Hospodar of Moldavia, the two sons of Cantecu-

* Dr. Long, of Pembroke College, Cambridge, caused a globe of this kind to be made, of eighteen feet diameter, and capable of containing thirty persons.

sena, late Hospodar of Wallachia, and Miletetski, Prince of Georgia, who had been stripped of his dominions by the Shah of Persia. All these strangers, together with the native and foreign merchants, who flocked to the new capital, with the shipping and the dock-yards on the Neva, contributed to make Petersburg a busy, bustling, lively city.

CHAPTER XI.

Charles XII. returns to Sweden—The Tzar visits Holland France, and Prussia.

In the midst of the festivities of Petersburg, Charles XII. made his sudden appearance at Stralsund. His strange and outrageous conduct had wearied out the patience of the Turk; and after his last mad exploit at Bender*, not surpassed in absurdity by the most absurd adventure that the fertile imagination of Cervantes conceived for the Knight of the Woful Countenance, he was no longer left at liberty, neither had he the means, to repeat this or any other of his mad freaks. He wisely therefore, for once, consented to leave the country, and on the 14th November, 1714, made his appearance, in disguise, at the gates of Stralsund.

The first unwise thing he did, after his return, was to take Goertz into his confidence, who, to his misfortune, obtained a greater sway over his mind than Piper ever had; the second was to ask money from the citizens of Stockholm to raise and support an army of 25,000 men; and the third, to quarrel with the King of Prussia, in particular, and to reject all propositions for a negociation on the part of the allies,—of whom, from the Elbe to the Baltic, Peter was the head and support. These allies either wished to retain por-

* Voltaire's Charles XII.

tions of the Swedish dominions which they had obtained during the war, or to acquire others, most of which had been conquests of the great Gustavus. These allies of the Tzar were the King of Prussia, the King of Denmark, the King of Poland, and the King of England, Elector of Hanover.

Formidable as this host of claimants was, Charles succeeded in getting the money from his exhausted subjects. "What little they had," says Voltaire, "they freely parted with; there was no refusing anything to a prince who only asked to give; who lived as hard as the soldiery, and exposed his life no less than they; his misfortunes, his distresses, his captivity, his return, affected both his subjects and foreigners;—he was blamed, admired, and assisted." The same author's estimate of his qualities is very just:—"The glory of Charles was quite of an opposite kind to that of Peter; it had not the least affinity with the establishment of arts, with legislation, policy, and commerce; it was limited to his person: his principal merit was a very extraordinary valour; he defended his dominions with a fortitude equal to his bravery, which could not but strike nations with respect for him: he had more well-wishers than allies*."

In April, 1717, the Prussians, Danes, and Saxons united their forces before Stralsund; and thus Charles, besieged on the shores of the Baltic, had only escaped from a foreign prison to be confined in one of his own. Towards the end of the

* History of the Russian Empire.

year, Stralsund, reduced to a heap of ruins, surrendered to the King of Prussia; but Charles, at the risk of his life, escaped in a small boat, with ten persons only, his officers having artfully forced him to quit the place. He landed at Carlscrona, where he remained the whole winter, ordering new levies, and drawing plans for his future conquests. When his friend Decker, who had delivered up the place, came before him, the king reproached him for having capitulated with his enemies: "I had your glory too much at heart," answered Decker, "to hold out in a town which your Majesty had quitted."

The Tzar, in the mean time, had conquered all Finland, and left an army there under Prince Galitzin. Marshal Scherematof was in Pomerania, with 14,000 or 15,000 men. Weimar had surrendered on capitulation. In Poland were distributed 30,000 Russians, under Generals Bruce and Bauer. Peter had conquered the provinces of Livonia and Esthonia, on the eastern shores of the Baltic, and the whole of both the coasts of the Gulf of Finland were in his possession. Having, therefore, nothing to apprehend on the part of Sweden, he now undertook a second tour through Europe, in which he was accompanied by his beloved Catharine. He visited in succession Stralsund, Mecklenburg, Hamburg, Pyrmont, and returned to Schwerin. From thence he went to Rostock, where forty-five of his large galleys had arrived, to carry troops to the island of Rugen, which being landed, he hoisted his flag, and took the command of the galleys, proceeding with them to Copenhagen. Here he remained from two to three

months, visiting, with his consort, all the places that were deemed worth seeing; and, during this time, the royal guests were splendidly entertained by the King of Denmark.

While the Tzar was on this visit, a British squadron of ships, under Sir John Norris, and a squadron of Dutch ships, commanded by Rear-admiral Grave, arrived in Copenhagen roads, each with convoys of several hundred vessels. The Swedes had a large force at sea, and Peter proposed to Sir John Norris to join the Russian and Danish fleets with the other two, and putting to sea, proceed to look out for the Swedish fleet. After some discussion, it was agreed that the Tzar should hoist his standard on board his largest galley, which was manned with 500 men, as commander-in-chief of the united fleets: he was accordingly saluted, on hoisting his flag, by the flag-ships of the other three admirals. They had very soon intelligence of the Swedes having put into Carlscrona; and therefore the English and Dutch admirals, each proceeded with their respective convoys, and the Tzar and the Danes returned to Copenhagen. Peter made no scruple to declare that he felt it to be the proudest moment of his life, when he hoisted his flag to command these four united fleets*.

Having taken leave of the court of Denmark,

* Sir John Norris, in one of his despatches, describes the Tzar's visit to his ship: 'He is pleased to be very curious in his inquiries; and there is not a part of the ship he is not desirous of examining. The improvements he has made, by the help of English builders, are such as a seaman would think almost impossible for a nation so lately used to the sea. They have built three sixty-gun ships, which are every way equal to the best of that rank in our country."

the Tzar and Tzarina set out for Hamburg; from thence Peter proceeded alone to Lubeck, and on to Havelberg, where he had a private interview with the King of Prussia. He then returned, by the Elbe, to Hamburg, but stopped a night at Nymagen, where he arrived late, with only two attendants, in a common post-chaise. Having taken some poached eggs and a little bread and cheese, he retired to rest, and his companions had a bottle of wine. When starting, at an early hour in the morning, one of the gentlemen asked the landlord what was to pay? "One hundred ducats," was the answer.—"What!" cried the astonished Russian.—"One hundred ducats," repeated mine host; "for my part I should be glad to give a thousand, if I was the Tzar of Russia." Peter asked the man if eggs were so very scarce in that place.—"No," said Boniface, "but emperors are."

He arrived at Amsterdam about the middle of December; where he was received with every possible mark of respect and attention. The Earl of Albemarle (Van Keppel) and three of the burgomasters met him on his entry, and the earl addressed him in a pompous, flowery speech, in the Dutch language. "I thank you heartily," said Peter, "though I don't understand much of what you say. I learnt *my* Dutch among ship-builders, but the sort of language you have spoken, I am sure I never learnt." Peter had a great dislike to all kind of ceremony. Being invited to dine with some merchants and builders, they addressed him, "your Majesty," and in speaking made use of ceremonious and courtly language. Peter cut short their discourse with, "Come, brothers,

let us converse like plain and honest ship-carpenters." A servant was pouring out a glass of beer for him—"Give me the *can*," said he, laughing; "I can now drink out of this jug as much as I like, and nobody can tell how much." In this way did he put his old friends at their ease.

The Tzarina had remained at Schwerin, indisposed, being far advanced in her third pregnancy since her marriage; but finding herself soon able to travel, she proceeded towards Holland, to join her husband. She got no farther, however, than Wesel, where she was delivered of a prince, who died the next day. It was intended she should pass her confinement in Holland, and the Tzar's old associates persuaded themselves it would have been most highly gratifying to him if his consort should have produced a young *Pieter van Zaandam*, in the midst of his early and honest friends and fellow-labourers. It may be imagined with what joy and fondness he was received by the tradesmen, and seamen, and ship-carpenters of Zaandam, among whom he had lived so long as their companion. It was no sooner known that his yacht was arrived, than the whole quay was crowded, and "*Welkom, welkom, Pieter Baas*," resounded from a thousand mouths. A respectable female rushed forward to greet him, as he stepped on shore. "My good lady," he says, "how do you know who I am?" "By your Majesty being, some nineteen years ago, so frequently at our house and table; I am the wife of Baas Pool." He immediately recognised, embraced, and kissed her on the forehead, and invited himself to dine with her that very day. So little difference did his old companions find in

his manners and conduct after a lapse of nineteen years, and the various scenes and situations through which he had passed! The only change they noticed was his now being able to endure a crowd, and to be stared at. His movements were as rapid as before, and his eye as piercing as ever.

One of his first visits was to the little cottage in which some nineteen years before he had dwelt, when learning the art of ship-building: he found it kept up in neat order, and dignified with the name of the *Prince's House*. This little cottage is still carefully preserved. It is surrounded by a neat building with large arched windows, having the appearance of a conservatory or green-house, which was erected in 1823 by order of the present Princess of Orange, sister to the late Emperor Alexander who purchased it to secure its preservation. In the first room you still see the little oak table and three chairs which constituted its furniture when Peter occupied it. Over the chimney-piece is inscribed,

PETRO MAGNO
ALEXANDER,

and in the Russian and Dutch,

"*To a Great Man nothing is little.*"

The ladder to the loft still remains, and in the second little room below are some models and several of his working-tools. Thousands of names are scribbled over every part of this once humble residence of Peter the Great.

On entering this cottage, Peter is said to have been evidently affected. Recovering himself, he ascended the loft, where was a small closet, in which he had been accustomed to perform his devotions,

and remained there alone a full half-hour ; with what various emotions his mind must have been affected while in this situation, could be known only to himself, but might easily be imagined. It could hardly fail to recall to his recollection the happy period when he "communed with his own heart" in this sacred little chamber, and "remembered his Creator in the days of his youth,"—days which he might naturally enough be led to compare and contrast with those of the last nineteen years of his life, filled up as they had been with many and varied incidents, painful, hazardous, disastrous and glorious.

Every one was anxious to bring to his recollection any little circumstance in which he had been concerned,—among others, a beautiful boat was brought to him as a present, in the building of which he himself had done "yeoman service." He was delighted to see that this ancient piece of the workmanship of his own hands had been preserved with such care. He caused it to be put on board a ship bound for Petersburg, but she was unfortunately captured by the Swedes ; and the boat is still kept in the arsenal of Stockholm.

With his old acquaintance, Kist, the blacksmith, he visited the smithy, which was so dirty that the gentleman of his suite who attended him was retreating, but Peter stopped him to blow the bellows and heat a piece of iron, which, when so done, he beat out with the great hammer. Kist was still but a journeyman blacksmith, and the Tzar out of compassion for his old acquaintance made him a handsome present.

The Emperor was now determined to visit the

capital of France, taking with him the Princes Kourakin and Dolgorouki, the Vice-Chancellor Baron Shaffirof, and the ambassador Tolstoy. Peter at first had some reluctance to take this journey on account of his ignorance of the French language, but he overcame this: he determined, however, that Catharine should not on any account accompany him, but remain in Holland till his return. It was not from any dread that the incumbrances of ceremony or the curiosity of a court might be irksome to her, nor that the French were incapable of estimating the merit of a woman who, from the banks of the Pruth to the shores of Finland, had, by her husband's side, faced death, both by sea and land,—the French were, of all other nations, the most likely to appreciate heroic qualities like these in a female;—no, it was to prevent the possibility of her delicacy being wounded by the affected squeamishness of a court which might not assign to her that place, or pay her that respect which her situation entitled her to. There was, it is true, some similarity between the marriages of the deceased Louis XIV. and Peter,—with this difference, which Voltaire admits, that Peter had *publicly* married a heroine, Louis, *privately*, a clever and agreeable woman.

Great preparations were made at Paris for the reception of the Tzar. Coaches, attended with a squadron of guards, had been sent out to meet him, but, with his usual rapidity and dislike of ceremony, he outstripped his intended court. It had been arranged that he and his escort should be splendidly lodged and entertained at the Louvre, but Peter's object being to avoid as much as pos-

sible all the idle ceremonies which would interfere with his pursuits, he went that very evening to lodge at the hôtel de Lesdiguières, at the other end of the town, where he might be master of his own time, and at his ease. His reply to the servants of the sovereign was, " I am a soldier; a little bread and beer satisfy me; I prefer small apartments to large ones. I have no desire to be attended with pomp and ceremony, nor to give trouble to so many people."

If Peter had been open to flattery, he found an ample store in Paris to gratify any avidity he might possess on that score. Happening to dine with the Duke d'Autin, he perceived in the dining room his portrait fresh painted. On visiting the mint, a medal was struck, which was purposely suffered to fall from the die just at his feet; on taking it up he found it to be a medal of himself, on the obverse of which was a Fame, with this motto, *Vires acquirit eundo*. Wherever he went, the portraits of the Tzar and Tzarina stared him in the face. On visiting the artists whatever picture he most admired, he was requested to accept, in the king's name. He went to see the tapestry of the Gobelins, the carpets of the Savonnerie, the different apartments of the king's sculptors, painters, goldsmiths, and mathematical instrument makers; and whatever seemed most to attract his regards was offered to him in the same style. He visited the Academy of Sciences, and his name was enrolled among the number of its members. In short, he made a point of seeing all that was curious for magnificence, ingenuity, or utility. He had so far got the better of his

shyness since the period of his visit to England, that he went to see the French Parliament when sitting, and attended in state the service of several of the churches.

Paris, no doubt, offered a variety of objects to delight and astonish the northern hero; but nothing, perhaps, gave him a higher degree of pleasure and admiration, than to see an operation performed on a man perfectly blind, whom Mr. Wallace, an English oculist, restored to sight. He was brought to the hôtel Lesdiguières for the purpose of performing the operation in presence of the Tzar. It was observed that his Majesty, when the needle was first put to the eye, turned away his head for a moment. The operation was successful; and Peter was so much delighted, that he engaged Mr. Wallace to receive and instruct a pupil whom he designed to send to him on his return to Russia.

Peter paid a visit to the splendid tomb of Cardinal Richelieu, one of the finest pieces of sculpture in Paris: he contemplated the statue of that celebrated minister, to whom France owed so much of her glory and prosperity, with fixed attention for some time, and at last is said to have exclaimed, "Thou great man! I would have given thee one half of my dominions, to learn of thee how to govern the other."

He also showed himself at the Sorbonne, where the doctors had the bad taste to thrust into his hands a memorial, in which they expressed their anxiety for the reunion of the Greek and Latin churches, about which the Tzar probably never had troubled himself, or, if he did, it was very

unlikely that he, the patriarch, or at least the head of the Greek church, would submit to acknowledge either the temporal or spiritual sovereignty of the Pope. He received this pedantic memorial with great affability, but told its authors he was a soldier, and had not much attended to controversial matters, which he supposed were contained in their paper, and that his bishops were better versed in them than himself. The Russian bishops, however, were indignant at the proposal. Voltaire says, it was to dissipate the apprehensions of such a reunion that, some time after, when, in 1718, he had expelled the Jesuits out of his dominions, he renewed the farce already described under the name of the *Conclave*.

As when in England, so now in France, Peter engaged and carried back with him artists and mechanics of various kinds, in procuring whom he met with no difficulty. He had seen all the trades and manufactories of the capital and its vicinity, and knew what would best suit his own country. His visit, however, was not confined to matters of this kind. He drew up with his own hand the minutes of a treaty of commerce, which his ministers negociated after his departure. He had also several communications with the French ministers relating to the peace between the northern powers.

Having taken leave of France, he hastened to Amsterdam, to rejoin Catharine, who, during his absence, had been treated with every mark of kindness and attention by the Dutch authorities, and amused on the waters with sailing parties and sham fights.

It was the invariable custom of Peter, when

travelling, to inquire at every city, town, or even village, if there was anything remarkable or extraordinary to be seen; and whenever it happened that something was mentioned, no matter what, he immediately uttered his old Dutch expression, "*dat wil ik zien*"—I shall see that; so eager was he to obtain knowledge of every description. In passing through Wittemberg, in Saxony, on his way to Berlin, he asked the innkeeper if there was nothing particular to be seen in that place? "Not much," was the answer, "except, perhaps, the old palace of the elector, wherein is the apartment and the study occupied by Luther, and his monument in the church."—"*Dat wil ik zien;*" and while dinner was preparing he hurried away to the church, where he saw placed on the tomb of Luther a statue in bronze as large as life. "This is not too much," said the Tzar, "for so great a man." On entering the apartment where Luther lived and died, the conductor pointed out a large spot of ink on the wall, and said that the devil having appeared one day to Luther while he was writing, and teased and annoyed him beyond all patience, he took up his inkstand and hurled it at the head of the "foul fiend," but it struck the wall, and every attempt to efface the mark has failed. Peter laughed at so ridiculous a story, not believing that so learned a man could possibly imagine that he saw the devil. Perceiving the smoky walls covered with the names of visiters, "I must add mine," said Peter; and taking from his pocket a bit of chalk, wrote his name in Russian characters close to the spot of ink. As a memorial of the hand-writing of this great man,

a small box with a grating in front of it was placed over the name. "I saw it," says Stæhlin, "in my way to Russia in the year 1735."

In proceeding to Berlin the Tzar travelled post, leaving the Tzarina and the court to follow at their leisure. He entered Berlin at a late hour, and alighted at a lodging which his ambassador had prepared for him. Frederick sent his grand master of the ceremonies to wait on him and to compliment him on his arrival. The Tzar gave them to understand his stay would be very short, and that, if the king pleased, he would wait upon him the next day at noon. Accordingly, two hours before the time, six of the most splendid court carriages came to the Tzar's lodging, in each of which was a young Russian nobleman whom the Tzar had sent to study at Berlin. The carriages and the retinue waited till noon, when they were informed that the Tzar was already with the king. He had slipped out of the back-door and walked to the palace. The king was greatly surprised; but the Tzar, thanking him for his polite attention, said, "I am not accustomed to such magnificence —I dislike parade, and always walk whenever I can. I frequently walk five times the distance I have done to-day."

Two days after this the Tzarina and the whole court arrived, and were escorted to a beautiful house and garden, belonging to the Queen of Prussia, situated on the banks of the river, named *Mon Bijou*. Voltaire is pleased to say that the new King of Prussia was not less an enemy to the vanities of ceremony and magnificence than the Russian monarch; that a king, in a wooden

arm-chair, and clothed like a common soldier, denying himself all the delicacies of the table, and all the conveniences of life, was a rebuke to the etiquette of Vienna and Spain, the punctilio of Italy, and the predominant fondness for luxury in France: he observes that the manner of living of the Tzar and Tzarina was in like plainness and severity; and that had Charles XII. been with them, four crowned heads would have been seen together with less fastuous pomp about them, than a German bishop, or a Roman cardinal*.

This may be true as regards the private habits of the king and queen of Prussia; but the Tzar and Tzarina were treated with more of pride and pomp in the manner of living than plainness and severity. Their reception at this court, as described by an eye-witness, is curious and interesting; but the writer at a mature age describes what her impressions were when she was a child of eight years old†:—

"The Tzar and Tzarina with all their attendants came by water to *Mon Bijou*. The king and queen received them on the shore. The king handed the Tzarina out of the boat. The Tzar taking the king by the hand, said,—'I am overjoyed to see you, brother Frederick;' he then approached the queen to embrace her, but she looked as if she would have rather been excused. They were attended, the writer says, by a whole train of what were called ladies as part of their suite, consisting chiefly of young German women,

* Voltaire.

† Mémoires de la Margravine de Bareith.

who performed the part of ladies' maids, chamber-maids, cook-maids, and washerwomen; almost all of whom had a richly-clothed child in their arms. 'The queen,' she says, 'refused to salute these creatures.'

"The Tzarina is short and lusty, remarkably coarse, without grace and animation. One need only see her to be satisfied of her low birth. At the first blush one would take her for a German actress. Her clothes looked as if bought at a doll-shop; every thing was so old fashioned, and so bedecked with silver and tinsel. She was decorated with a dozen orders, portraits of saints, and relics, which occasioned such a clatter (*geklink klank*), that when she walked one would suppose an ass with bells was approaching. The Tzar, on the contrary, was tall and well made. His countenance is handsome, but there is something in it so rude that it inspires one with dread; he was dressed like a seaman, in a frock without lace or ornament."

At table the Tzar was placed next to the queen. "It is well known," this lady says, "that in his youth, the Tzar was once poisoned; the subtle venom fell upon his nerves, whence he is still subject to a kind of convulsive twitching which he cannot overcome. He had one of these while at table, and at the moment he happened to have a knife in his hand, with which he made such strange gesticulations, and on the side next the queen, that she became frightened and wished to leave the table; but the Tzar told her to make herself easy, assuring her he would do her no harm; once he caught her hand, and held it with such

force, that the queen desired him to be more respectful. On this he burst out into a fit of laughter, and said that she was of a much more delicate frame than his Catharine."

This lady then relates how the Tzar begged some statues and pieces of sculpture from the king, which he dared not to refuse, and a cabinet inlaid with amber, unique in its kind, and which cost Frederick I. a large sum of money. It was packed up and sent with the rest to St. Petersburg, to the great regret of the whole court. The strangers departed on the third day, when the queen betook herself immediately to *Mon Bijou;* and here, it is observed, she found the destruction of Jerusalem—"Never," says the writer, "did I see the like; all was so completely ruined, that the queen was obliged to renew everything in the house."

On Peter's return to Holland, the short time he remained there was almost wholly occupied in examining and purchasing whatever appeared to him most rare or valuable; and among other things, several of the most valuable specimens of pictures of the Dutch and Flemish schools, more particularly of Backhuysen and Van der Veldt, with a considerable collection of those by Rubens, Rembrandt, Teniers, Ostade, Jansteen and Wouvermans. He also purchased several cabinets of great value; among others, that of animals and insects of Albertus Seba. He also bought the highly esteemed anatomical cabinet of Professor Ruysch, which took fifty years in collecting, for 30,000 florins. At that time it was considered particularly valuable and curious, as containing a regular succession of the young fœtus, from the

earliest period of conception to the birth of the infant, and for the exquisitely delicate injections of the brain and the eye. He also made a collection of the best books which treated of fortification, engineering, and navigation, the works of Erasmus, and a great variety of articles, which formed a part of the collection that laid the foundation of the Imperial Academy of Sciences; an institution of which he drew the plan himself.

CHAPTER XII.

The Trial, Condemnation, and Death of the Tzarovitz Alexis.

THE fate of the unfortunate, but unworthy, son of Peter, was fast approaching its crisis. A tragical scene was to be acted, which required on the part of the sovereign all the sternness and severity of Roman virtue. For a long time it had occasioned great anxiety and grief to the Tzar, to find his son Alexis, not only disinclined to second his views for the regeneration and improvement of his country, but to disobey every admonition; to connect himself with a party whose object was to destroy all that his father had created, to listen to the counsels of the malecontents, among whom were several priests, who had persuaded him that it was his duty to hold in abhorrence his father's innovations; and, at his death, which was represented as an event at no great distance, to abolish the whole of them, and revert to the ancient and wholesome customs of the country. This weak young prince, abetted by his mother and family, readily listened to all the suggestions of his base advisers, and thus encouraged, gave himself up to every species of licentiousness and debauchery.

The death of his neglected and insulted wife, who fell, as has been seen, a victim to his unfeeling and brutal conduct, was a sore affliction to

Peter's mind, and determined him at once to come to a clear understanding with a son so utterly unworthy to succeed to the government of a country which, by his talent and laborious exertions and perseverance, through good report and ill report, had been raised to its proper standard in the scale of civilised nations. It was but too evident, that, unless a total change could be effected in the conduct and opinions of this unworthy son, Russia at the death of the Tzar would very soon be plunged into its former state of barbarism. Peter, therefore, while yet grieving for the death of the princess, addressed a letter to Alexis, in which, after taking a view of his faults and his follies, and bestowing on him fatherly admonition, he concludes by telling him, that he will still wait to see if he be disposed to amend; but if not, that he may rest assured he will cut him off from the succession, as an useless limb; that he must not imagine this menace is used merely to intimidate, nor must he place any reliance on the title he possesses of being his eldest son; for that, since he has never spared his own life for the good of his country, and the prosperity of his people, he sees no reason why he should spare that of a son who is careless of both. "I would rather," says he, "commit them to an entire stranger, who may be worthy of such a trust, than to my own offspring undeserving it."

In reply to this letter, the miguided young man briefly told his father that he was ready to renounce the crown; that he called God to witness, and swore upon his soul, he never would lay claim to the succession; that he committed his children into his

father's hands; and that, for himself, he desired no more than a subsistence during life.

His father once more addressed him in these words:—"I observe in your letter that you speak only of the succession, as if I stood in need of your consent; and you say not a word of the affliction which I told you your conduct had given me for so many years; the admonitions of a father appear to make no impression on you. I have prevailed on myself to write to you once more, and for the last time. Though you may not now mean to violate your promises, yet those *bushy beards* will bind you to their purpose, and compel you to break your word. These are the persons who place their hopes on you; and you have no gratitude to him who gave you life. Since the time of your coming of age have you ever assisted him in his labours? have you not found fault with, do you not detest, everything I do for the good of my people? have I not every reason to believe that, should you survive me, you will destroy all that I have been doing? Amend your life—make yourself worthy of the succession, or turn monk. I desire your answer personally or in writing, or I must deal with you as a criminal."

The reply of the prince was as follows: "Your letter of the 19th of this month I received yesterday morning; my illness prevents me from writing at length. I intend to embrace the monastic life, and I request your gracious consent to that effect."

Thus matters stood till the departure of the Tzar for France and Germany was at hand. He then paid a visit to his son, and found him ill or feigning to be so, and in bed; but

he confirmed to him, by the most solemn oaths, that he would retire into a convent. Peter, with the feeling of a father, having compassion for his youth, laid before him all the difficulties of that kind of life, and advised him to do nothing lightly, but reflect on it well, and take six months to consider of it. After this he set out with his consort. That very night was spent by Alexis with his dissolute associates, in drunkenness and debauchery.

Seven months passed away, and the Tzar heard nothing from his son. He wrote to him therefore, from Copenhagen, reproaching him for his silence, desiring him, if he had applied himself to the task of making himself fit for the succession, not to delay beyond a week to join him at Copenhagen, where he would arrive in time to be present at the operations of the ensuing campaign; but, if he took the other part, he desired to know by the return of the courier, at what time he was prepared to carry his plan into execution. On the receipt of this letter, which called for his immediate determination, he consulted his evil-minded advisers, who told him how dangerous it would be to put himself into the power of a provoked father and a mother-in-law, at a distance from all his friends. He pretended, however, to the regency that he should set out for Copenhagen, and obtained money to a considerable amount from Menzikoff for the expenses of the journey; but on reaching the borders of Livonia, he took the road to Vienna, and threw himself on the protection of the Emperor, intending, if permitted, to continue at his court till the death of his father.

Charles, however, was in no disposition to give offence to the Tzar of Russia, and after some time, the Tzarovitz removed himself to Naples.

When the Tzar heard of his proceedings, he sent away Captain Romanzoff of the guards, and M. Tolstoi, a privy-councillor, with a letter dated from Spa, the 10th July, 1717, of which the following is the substance. "That Tolstoi and Romanzoff will make known to him his will; that on his obedience he gave him his assurance and promise before God, that he would not inflict punishment on him; but, on his return would love him better than ever. But," says he, "if you do not, by virtue of the power I have received from God as your father, I pronounce against you my everlasting curse; and as your sovereign, I can assure you, I shall find ways to punish you; which I hope, as my cause is just, God will take it in hand, and assist me in avenging it."

It required much persuasion and promises, and even menace, before the envoys could prevail on Alexis to return with them to his father. They dwelt on the solemn asseveration in the letter, that the Tzar would not only pardon, but would love him better than ever. On this assurance, the Tzarovitz, with his mistress, set out with the two envoys. They arrived at Moscow on the 13th February, 1718, and on that very day the Prince had a private interview with his father.

A general belief now prevailed that a reconciliation had taken place, and that everything was to be forgotten; but the very next day, the regiments of guards were ordered under arms, and the great bell of Moscow tolled. The senate, the

boyars, the privy-councillors were summoned to the castle; the bishops, the archimandrites, the superior clergy, the professors of divinity, assembled in the cathedral. Alexis was brought into the castle as a prisoner; he fell on his knees before his father, and delivered to him a paper, in which he acknowledged his crimes, declaring himself unworthy of the succession, and entreated that his life might be spared. The Tzar raising him up, took him into a closet, but what passed therein is conjecture only. When brought back into the council-chamber, a declaration of the Tzar was publicly read. It commenced by reproaching his son with indolence and remissness in improving himself, in associating with dissolute companions, his hatred of all improvements, his violation of conjugal faith by taking up with a low-born woman, by placing himself under the protection of the Emperor of Germany, slandering his father, and asking the Emperor to defend him by force of arms, telling him (what turned out to be too true) that his life was not safe if he returned to Russia. The declaration then proceeds:—

"Such was the manner in which our son has returned; and though his flight and his calumnies deserve death, those crimes our fatherly affection has forgiven. But his notorious unworthiness and immorality will not allow us, in conscience, to leave to him the succession to the empire; it being too manifest that by his ill-conduct the glory of the nation would be overturned, and a loss occasioned of all the provinces recovered by our arms. To place our subjects under such a successor, would be to plunge them into a condition

much worse than they have at any time experienced. Accordingly, by our paternal power, in virtue of which, agreeably with the laws of our empire, every subject even can at pleasure disinherit a son,— and, in pursuance of our prerogative as sovereign prince, and in consideration of the welfare of our dominions, — we deprive our said son Alexis of the succession after us to the throne of Russia, on account of his crimes and his unworthiness, even though there should not exist a single person of our family at the time of our decease.

"And we constitute and declare, in default of a successor of a more advanced age, our second son Peter, young though he be, as successor to the said throne after us.

"May our paternal malediction fall on our above-mentioned son Alexis, if ever at any time he shall set up such pretensions to the said succession, or take measures for procuring it.

"We also require our faithful subjects, ecclesiastics, and seculars, as well as every other state, and the whole Russian nation, that, in pursuance of this ordinance and our will, they acknowledge and consider our said son Peter, nominated by us to the succession, as the lawful successor, and that, conformably with this present ordinance, they confirm every part of it by oath before the holy altar, on the holy gospels, kissing the cross.

"And all those who shall at any time whatsoever oppose this our will, and who, from and after the date hereof, shall dare to consider our son Alexis as successor, or assist him to that end, we declare them traitors to us and their country; and we have ordered this present ordinance to be

published, that no person may plead ignorance. Given, &c., 14th February 1718. Signed with our hand, and sealed with our seal."

After which was read the "Act of Renunciation," on the part of the Tzarovitz, which he had placed in the hands of his Majesty:—

"I, the undersigned, declare before the holy Evangelists, that I acknowledge and avow this exclusion to be just, as having deserved it by my crimes and unworthiness: and I bind myself and swear in the name of the Sacred and Almighty Trinity, to submit myself wholly to this my father's will; never to seek after this succession, never to lay claim to it, never to accept it, under any pretence whatever; and I acknowledge as lawful successor, my brother, the Tzarovitz Peter Pietrovitz, on which I kiss the holy cross, and sign these presents with my own hand.—ALEXIS."

The same instruments were then taken by the Tzar to the cathedral, where they went through a second reading, and all the ecclesiastics testified their approbation, and signed their names. "Never," says Voltaire, "was prince disinherited in so authentic a manner. There are many states in which such an act would be of no validity; but in Russia, as among the ancient Romans, every father could disinherit his son; and this is much stronger in a sovereign than in a subject, and especially in such a sovereign as Peter." This sovereign, however, has been much censured for breaking faith with his son, after the solemn promise, amounting to an oath, that if he returned from Naples, he would not only forgive him, but love him more than ever. The same writer finds

an apology, by saying, that "perhaps the father, in the conflict between paternal affection and reasons of state, meant only to confer that love on his son as a recluse; that perhaps he might still hope to reclaim him; and by bringing him to a due sense of the loss of a crown, render him worthy of the succession."

The apology appears but a weak one; still, it must be admitted, the Tzar was placed in a critical and most painful situation. He knew that this son was by nature of a very weak order of intellect, and that he had long been beset by a mischievous party, who instilled into his mind a hatred of his father and of every step he took for the improvement of his country; who had advised his elopement, and who would, undoubtedly, set aside a renunciation which had been thrust upon him; and use every endeavour to restore to him the crown which, he would be told, had been illegally transferred to a younger and a half-brother. He knew, and all sensible men who had any regard for themselves and their country knew, that in such a case, the certain consequence would be a civil war, and the end of it a total loss of all his glorious conquests, and the ruin of all his useful establishments, in laying the foundations of which he had spent the whole of a laborious life. The question, as Voltaire says, lay between the welfare of eighteen millions of men and one single person, and that person wholly incapable of governing. These were the considerations, probably, which determined the Tzar to know the names of the disaffected, to what extent their numbers amounted, and who had been his principal ill-advisers; and this was considered

to be of such importance, that the Tzar threatened his son with capital punishment should he conceal anything from him. Alexis promised to declare the whole and pure truth, as before God, and without disguise; and swore, on the holy evangelists, before the altar, to discover everything.

The next day the Tzar sent him a number of questions, which he was to answer in writing. One of them related to a letter from M. Beyer, the emperor's resident at Petersburg, written after the prince's elopement, the substance of which was, that the Russian army in Mecklenburgh had mutinied; that several of the officers talked of sending the new Tzarina (Catharine) and her son to the prison where the repudiated Tzarina was confined, and of placing Alexis on the throne. To this gossiping letter of one of those gentlemen who, residing at foreign courts, think it a part of their duty to send to their employers the news of the day, whether true or false, the young prince might have pleaded ignorance; what had he to do with Beyer's letter? He was asked, however, the following question.

"When you saw by Beyer's letter, that there was a revolt in the Mecklenburg army, you was glad of it; I apprehend you had some view, and that you would have declared for the rebels, even in my life-time?"

Such a question among a civilised people, and in England in particular, would not have been suffered to be put; or, if put, the judge would have cautioned the prisoner not to answer. But Russia was yet barbarous, as well as despotic; and a person there might be condemned to death for a secret

sentiment on a prospective event which never happened. Alexis, however, answered the question in writing. "Had the rebels invited me in your lifetime, I should probably have joined them, had they been strong enough."

Another charge was of a much more serious nature. Rough drafts of two letters, written from Vienna, were found in his own hand, one to the senators, and the other to the archbishops of Russia; in the latter of which he says: "The continual injuries which I have undeservedly suffered, have obliged me to quit my country; I had a narrow escape from being shut up in a convent: they who have confined my mother were about to use me in the same manner. I am under the protection of a great prince. It is my desire you will not forsake me at present."

The words *at present* had been drawn through with a pen, and afterwards replaced with his own hand, and again a second time effaced. The letters themselves were stopped by the court of Vienna.

A person of the name of Afanassief deposed that he had heard Alexis say, "I will say something to the bishops, and they will tell it among the priests, and the priests to their parishioners, and I shall be placed on the throne, even though it were against my will." His mistress Aphrosine deposed against him, as complaining of his father, and wishing for his death. The prince was also accused of consulting his mother, the late Tzarina, and his sister, the Princess Mary, with regard to his elopement; and the Bishop of Rostof deposed that, being in their confidence, he knew that these two princesses entertained hopes of a change, that

would release them from confinement; and that they instigated Alexis to fly into Germany, instead of going to his father at Copenhagen. A priest of the name of Jacques, being put to the torture, owned that the prince, in confession, had accused himself before God, that he had wished his father's death; and that he, the confessor made answer, "God will forgive you; it is no more than what we all wish."

It is not necessary to go through all the proceedings of this lamentable story. The most extraordinary part of it is the eagerness with which Alexis strove, as it were, to make himself appear guilty; and even the falsehoods which he uttered, to give a stronger colour to his guilt: for instance, in answer to his father's sixth question, he owns he did not see the Emperor; that he applied to Count Schonborn, who said to him, "The Emperor will not forsake you; and at a proper season, after your father's demise, he will assist you with an armed force to ascend the throne." "My answer was," added the accused prince, "*that* is not what I ask: all I desire is, that the Emperor will be pleased to grant me his protection." This was in the month of February, at Moscow. But after the execution of the accomplices named by the prince, and a lapse of four months, and when the proceedings were renewed against this unfortunate young man at Petersburg, being again interrogated on this point, he says in writing, "Being resolved to imitate my father in nothing, I endeavoured to arrive at the succession at any rate, even by foreign assistance; and if I had succeeded in my object, and the emperor had done *what he promised me*,—

that he would obtain for me the crown of Russia, even by open force,—I would have spared nothing to have secured myself in the succession. I would, at my own cost, have maintained the auxiliary troops with which he would have supplied me, to put me in possession of the crown of Russia; and, in short, I would have stuck at nothing to have carried my point."

This gratuitous falsehood looks very much as if it had been extorted from him; unless, indeed, it was intended as a defiance to the proceedings which his father was instituting against him. The Tzar promised him pardon on making a general confession; but he did not desire him to state what was not true. He was asked, as a condition of that pardon, to declare the accomplices of his elopement; he concealed several of them; the answers he gave to several of his father's interrogatories in February, were at variance with those he delivered in July. When, therefore, Peter came to the final resolution of trying him by the great officers of state, the judges, and the bishops, he yielded to a distressing case of state necessity, which he considered as requiring the exercise of rigid justice, on the broad principle, that it is better a delinquent should be punished than a whole empire be endangered; and that reasons of state must be held as paramount even to the ties of nature and of blood, which in the present case, had long been severed by the unnatural conduct of the son against the father. In truth, his conduct had been such from his boyhood, as to efface every feeling of natural affection from his father's heart. In judging of this case, we should bear in mind what were

the circumstances, the condition, the manners, and the laws of Russia. Even now, in that despotic government, the summary removal from life of the sovereign, or members of the imperial family, is tacitly claimed as a sort of right*. Here, however, a solemn assembly was openly held, the charges promulgated, the sentence of the judges, and every document connected with the proceedings, published to the whole world, that both Russia and the surrounding nations might have the means of forming a judgment between the father and the son.

It has been said that Peter instituted these proceedings from a wish to secure the throne for his younger son, to the exclusion of Alexis; but there is proof on record that, many years before the birth of this boy he had determined to disinherit Alexis, and gave him notice he should do so, if he did not amend. As far back indeed as 1711, he had in his own mind set him aside. In that disastrous affair on the Pruth, in acquainting the senate with the perilous situation, into which he had been led by false information, all his resources cut off, his army surrounded by an enemy four times more numerous than his own, he concludes his letter by saying, "If I am doomed to perish here, and you should receive an authenticated account of my death, you will then proceed to choose, as my successor, *the most worthy among you.*"

The law of Russia, which conferred the fatal right on the Tzar to punish his son with death, merely for his elopement, independent of any other

* Quarterly Review, vol. xxxv.

crime, left this, or any other punishment in the sovereign's hands, but he thought it more proper to submit the case for the decision of the judges of the land, the nobles and the ecclesiastics, before whom he thus declared his sentiments ;—

" Though by all divine and human laws, and especially by those of Russia, which exclude all interposition of the civil power between father and son, even among private persons, we have a sufficient and absolute power of sentencing our son according to his crimes and our will, without consulting any one ; yet men not being so clear-sighted in their own affairs as in those of others, and the most skilful physicians, instead of prescribing for themselves, have recourse to others, when sick ; so, fearing lest I should bring some sin on my conscience, I state my case to you, and require a remedy. For if, ignorant of the name of my distemper, I should go about to cure it of my own ability, the consequence may be eternal death, seeing that I have sworn on the judgments of God, and have, in writing, promised my son his pardon, provided he tells me the truth, and afterwards confirms that promise with his mouth.

" Though my son has broken his promise, yet that I may not, in any thing, depart from my obligations, I desire you will think on this affair, and examine it with the greatest attention, to see what he has deserved. Do not flatter me ; be neither in the least afraid that, should he deserve only a slight punishment, and you deliver your opinion accordingly, it will offend me ; for I swear to you, by the great God, and by his judgments,

that you have absolutely nothing at all to apprehend.

"Let it give you no uneasiness that you have to try your sovereign's son; but, without any respect of persons, do justice, and destroy not both your souls and mine. Lastly, let not our conscience have anything to reproach us with on the terrible day of judgment, and let not our country be hurt."

The clergy were the first to deliver their opinion, which they did by stating, that the affair does not in any way belong to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction; that the absolute prerogative is vested in the sovereign, and does not depend on the judgment of the subjects. They quote cases from the Old Testament, in which it is said that "Whoever curseth his father or mother shall be punished with death;" and having cited various other passages, they thus conclude;—"If his Majesty is inclined to punish the delinquent, according to his actions and the measure of his guilt, he has before him examples from the Old Testament; if he be inclined to spare, he has the pattern of Christ himself, kindly receiving the penitent prodigal, dismissing the woman taken in adultery, who, by the law, was to be stoned; and delighting in mercy more than sacrifice. He has the example of David, who is solicitous for the safety of Absalom his son, though an open rebel, recommending him to the commanders of his army, who insisted on giving him battle; '*Spare my son Absalom*'—the father was for showing him mercy, but divine justice did not spare him. The Tzar's heart is in

the hands of God; let him choose that to which God shall incline him."

This opinion, which does great credit to the clergy of Russia, was signed by the metropolitan of Rezan, eight bishops, four archimandrites and two professors, and delivered to the Tzar: it manifestly was inclined to clemency. But more interrogations, and more confessions followed this; and on the 5th July the ministers, the senators, and generals, to the number of one hundred and twenty-four, unanimously condemned Alexis to death, but without specifying the manner of his execution; "submitting this sentence which we deliver, and this condemnation which we declare, to the supreme honour, the will, and the merciful revision of his majesty, our most merciful sovereign."

There can be but one opinion as to the harshness and barbarity of the whole proceeding; and better far would it have been for the father, in virtue of his prerogative, to have put to death his disobedient son, than to have worried him night and day for nearly five months, extorting from him confessions—not however, as has been said, by actual torture, at least this does not appear—but only surmised on the ground that nothing short of corporeal agony could have created in the young man a manifest desire to criminate himself, even as to his secret thoughts, and to represent himself as a person of a malignant mind and evil disposition. The Tzar, however, thought he was acting right, in referring to the judgment of the representatives of the nation a case, in which the fate of that nation was so deeply concerned; and not doubting the equity of his proceedings, he caused the

whole trial to be printed and translated, and thus submitted himself to the judgment of the world*.

A foreign writer, of the name of Lamberti, has accused Catharine of inducing the Tzar to bring Alexis to trial, and cause him to be sentenced to death; he asserts that the Tzar *knouted* his son, and then with his own hands cut off his head; but that, when publicly exposed, it was so cleverly fitted to the body, that it did not appear to have ever been severed; that Peter contracted a sourness after this, and entertained a thought of having the Tzarina shaved and shut up in a convent; that she and Menzikoff poisoned the Tzar;—with much more of such absurd trash, which the writer procured from a man, who was not in Russia at the time, and who, Voltaire says, owned to him "that all he had talked about with Lamberti, was only *the report of those times;*"—and this is history! As to the sourness of Peter, and the shaving and shutting up of Catharine, it may be charitably supposed that Lamberti had never heard of her accompanying him, long after this, to Persia, nor of her coronation, nor of the reasons assigned by Peter for conferring that honour on his faithful spouse. Voltaire very properly exposes the absurdity of the whole story; and further says, with regard to Catharine, on the authority of a public minister, that the Tzar told the Duke of Holstein that Catharine had entreated him to hinder the sentence being pronounced against the Tzarovitz; and that he should be satisfied by compelling

* Nestesuranoi. Mottley's book contains the whole of the voluminous documents that were made public.

him to become a monk, as the disgrace of a sentence of death would reflect on his grandson*. The Tzar, however, could not be prevailed on to yield to the entreaties of his consort, but thought it proper that the sentence should at least be publicly pronounced; that by this solemn act being publicly made known, and rendering Alexis civilly dead, he would be for ever disqualified from afterwards pretending even to the crown. By this it would seem the Tzar had no intention whatever of carrying the sentence into execution. In his letter to the several courts of Europe, assigning his reasons for the public trial of his son, he says, after stating the nature of the sentence, "and while we were debating in our mind between the natural motions of paternal clemency on one side, and the regard we ought to pay to the preservation and the future security of our kingdom on the other, and pondering on what resolution to take, in an affair of so great difficulty and importance, it pleased the Almighty God, by his especial will and his just judgment, and by his mercy, to deliver us out of that embarrassment, and to save our family and kingdom from the shame and the dangers, by abridging yesterday the life of our said son Alexis, after an illness with which he was seized, as soon as he had heard the sentence of death pronounced against him. That illness appeared at first like an apoplexy; but he afterwards recovered his senses, and received the holy sacraments as a Christian; and having desired to see us, we went to him immediately,

* Voltaire's Hist. de Russie.

with all our councillors and senators; and then he acknowledged and sincerely confessed all his said faults and crimes committed against us, with tears, and all the marks of a true penitent, and begged our pardon, which according to Christian and paternal duty we granted him: after which, on the 7th July at six in the evening, he surrendered his soul to God *."

This account, according to most of the historians, is strictly true, and certainly argues no intention on the part of the Tzar to have carried the sentence into execution; and yet various reports were spread over Europe, giving a very different interpretation to the manner of the prince's death, most of which may be traced to the different foreign residents at the court of Petersburg at the time. One wrote home a report that the Tzar had poisoned him; another that he had whipped or knouted him to death; and a third, that he had cut off his head with his own hands. At what particular time he could have done all or any of these, it would be difficult to discover. The Tzarovitz was taken out of the court in the evening of the 6th July; on the morning of the 7th, messengers came to the Tzar to report the illness of his son, with his request to see him.—He went accordingly, attended by all the great officers of his court, among whom were foreigners, both Scotch and Germans; he took an affectionate leave; but the illness of the prince increasing, he was sent for again in the evening, and was on the point of going when he was stopped by intelligence of his son's death.

* Mottley.

Here, therefore, there could be no knouting nor cutting the head off, unless it was done in the presence of the senators, the bishops, the generals and courtiers, all of whom accompanied the Tzar; and yet, one of our most intelligent travellers, a master of arts, a fellow of the Royal and Antiquarian Societies, and a dignitary of the church, states his belief that Alexis "was secretly executed in prison *."

Mr. Coxe places his faith on Büsching, the compiler of a historical magazine,—a receptacle for all that was sent to it,—in which it is positively affirmed that he was beheaded by order of his father, and that Marshal Weyde performed the office of executioner.—This, at any rate, exonerates the Tzar from having done it himself. And on what ground is this bold assertion made?—On a conversation of a second person with a certain Madame Cramer, a lady at Petersburg, who was in high confidence both with Peter and Catharine; and who, it is boldly asserted was employed in sewing the prince's head to the body before it lay in state. Why the head of a poor man, sick in his bed, should be privately taken off, for no other purpose than sewing it on again, is quite inconceivable. Still Mr. Coxe is disposed to believe that such was the case: he met with an intimate acquaintance of the above-mentioned lady, who assured him that he always found her extremely averse to hold any discourse on the death of Alexis; that she seemed exceedingly shocked

* Travels in Poland, Russia, &c., by W. Coxe, A.M., F.R.S., F.A.S., Rector of Bemerton.

(and well she might) whenever the topic was introduced, and *nothing further could be extorted from her, than that she was the person who prepared the body for the ceremony of lying in state.* Would the intimate acquaintance have "extorted" from Madame Cramer a direct falsehood? Was she to confess to an operation which she never performed, and which was much fitter for a surgeon than a delicate lady? Yet, strange to say, this very unwillingness of Madame Cramer to enter upon the subject, and her declaration that she *only* prepared the body for the funeral, adds, in Mr. Coxe's mind, a great degree of confirmation.

But Mr. Coxe has "an additional proof in favour of this fact," and from an English gentleman of undoubted veracity—a Mr. Riest, who had it from Prince Cantimir's secretary, who was eighty years of age, and the said prince was in high favour with Peter, as he undoubtedly must have been to get from him such a secret. Mr. Coxe adds, that "this fact (of beheading) appears so well attested, that many German historians have adopted it without reserve (and many of them are ready to adopt stranger things than this), and that in several of the genealogical tables of the imperial family, Alexis is inserted as beheaded *." It is surprising that a man of Mr. Coxe's sagacity should suffer himself to be so far led astray, as to ground his belief on such inconclusive evidence, He admits, indeed, that a passage in Bruce's Memoirs seems to invalidate what he calls "this

* Coxe.

concurrent evidence," and to *prove that he was poisoned*. Bruce's story is singularly curious, but it affords no such proof. It is as follows:—

"On the next day (after the trial) his Majesty, attended by all the senators and bishops, with several others of high rank, went to the fort, and entered the apartments where the Tzarovitz was kept prisoner. Some little time thereafter Marshal Weyde came out, and ordered me to go to Mr. Bear's the druggist, whose shop was hard by, and tell him to *make the potion strong* which he had bespoke, as the prince was then very ill. When I delivered this message to Mr. Bear, he turned quite pale, and fell a shaking and trembling, and appeared in the utmost confusion, which surprised me so much, that I asked him what was the matter with him, but he was unable to return me any answer. In the meantime, the marshal himself came in, much in the same condition with the druggist, saying he ought to have been more expeditious, as the prince was very ill of an apoplectic fit; upon this the druggist delivered him a silver cup with a cover, which the marshal himself carried into the prince's apartments, staggering all the way as he went, like one drunk. About half an hour after, the Tzar with all his attendants withdrew with very dismal countenances, and when they went, the marshal ordered me to attend at the prince's apartment, and in case of any alteration, to inform him immediately thereof: there were at that time two physicians and two surgeons in waiting, with whom, and the officer on guard, I dined on what had been dressed for the prince's dinner. The physicians were

called in immediately after to attend the prince, who was struggling out of one convulsion into another, and, after great agonies, expired at five o'clock in the afternoon."

Mr. Coxe, however, is so much prepossessed with the story of the decapitation as to say, "it by no means follows, even from this state of the case, that the Tzarovitz was poisoned." For he asks, "Can we suppose that Peter would order a dose of poison to be prepared for his son at a chemist's shop, and that Marshal Weyde would openly send for it without the least mystery? May we not rather infer that the potion was a medicine similar to those which had been already prescribed for the prince, who had for some time been extremely indisposed? The fright of the chemist, he argues, might arise from thinking his own safety involved in the catastrophe;" and he arrives at this most singular conclusion, that "the agitation of Marshal Weyde will be still more satisfactorily accounted for, if, according to Busching, he was preparing to perform, or had already performed, the execution." Mr. Coxe is here evidently in a dilemma—if preparing for the operation, where was the need of the poison?—if already performed, what was the use of the potion? If he was already poisoned, it could not be necessary to strike off his head—if beheaded, still less necessary to administer poison—if it was deemed necessary to behead him, why was it further necessary to sew the head on again, and so neatly that no one could know whether the head had ever been off?

With regard to the poison, it should be repeated

that Bruce is a very loose writer. If he had said *draught* instead of *potion*, a soothing draught or opiate to stay his convulsions (to which the family were subject), he would have been intelligible. One thing at least is certain, that between the poisoning and the beheading, the undetermined state of Mr. Coxe's opinion is quite sufficient to neutralise both.

Voltaire took a very different and probably a sounder view of the idle reports circulating at the time in Europe. "How could the Tzar," says he, "have cut off the head of his son, when extreme unction was administered to him in the presence of all the court? Had he no head when the oil was poured on it? At what time might this head have been stitched on again to his body? The prince, from the reading of the sentence to his death, was not left alone one moment. The anecdote of his father's making use of the axe overthrows the story of his having been despatched by poison. If the Tzar had poisoned his son, this would have deprived him of the advantage of all he had been doing, during the course of this extraordinary trial, to convince Europe of the right he had to punish: it would have brought a suspicion on the motives of the sentence, and would have been to condemn himself. If he had resolved on Alexis' death, he would have caused the sentence to be executed; was it not entirely in his power? Could a prudent person, a monarch, who had attracted the eyes of all the world, bring himself basely to poison one, whom he had a right to cut off with the sword of justice? Would he suffer his name to be transmitted to

posterity in the heinous colours of a parricide, when he might so easily have brought himself off only as a rigorous judge?"

The conclusion to which this shrewd writer comes is this,—that Peter had more of the king than the father in him; and that he sacrificed his own son to his views as founder and legislator, and to the interest of his nation, which, without this unhappy rigour, would have relapsed into the condition from which he had raised it; that the sacrifice was not made to a mother-in-law and the male child he had by her; for that he had often threatened to disinherit him before Catharine had brought forth that son, the infirmities of whose infancy bespoke him to be short-lived, and who accordingly died soon after; that he was not that weak, timorous prince, as to run such a length purely to humour his wife. "In fine," he says, "on maturely considering the catastrophe, the humane shudder, and the severe approve *."

If Alexis had honestly declared to his father, on his return from Naples, who his advisers were, the Tzar would, in all probability, have kept his solemn but conditional promise; he did not do this, but prevaricated and stated what was not the truth. It was, perhaps, not to be expected that he should involve his mother and his sister in the list of those who were sure to undergo the most

* Voltaire, in his History of Charles XII., written thirty-eight years after, says, "The death of a son, who deserved correction or disinheritance, would render Peter's memory odious, if the benefits derived from him by his subjects had not almost made cruelty towards his own nature pardonable."

rigorous punishment; though their conduct was highly reprehensible. Among the "bushy beards," was one Dozitheus, bishop of Rostof, who had a revelation from God that Peter had not three months to live; and he persuaded the weak woman, Eudoxia, who with Mary was in the convent of Leesdal, that she should, jointly with the Prince Alexis, ascend the throne. She had assumed the name of Helena on entering the convent, but she now re-assumed her proper name, laid aside her religious habit, caused herself to be styled *Majesty*, and the name of Catharine to be expunged from the liturgy, and adopted the ceremonial dress of the Tzarinas. The bursar of the convent remonstrated with her on these proceedings, but Eudoxia haughtily answered, "Peter chastised the Strelitzes for affronting his mother, and my son Alexis will not suffer his to be insulted,"—and immediately she confined the bursar to his cell. Three months had elapsed and the Tzar was still living, and Eudoxia expostulated with the bishop. "Madam," says he, "this is owing to my father's sins; he is in purgatory, and has signified this to me." Thus did this artful priest contrive to put off the predicted event from month to month, and extort money for thousands of *requiems* to be said to extract his father, piece by piece, out of purgatory. One Glebof, an officer, who had an intrigue with the repudiated Tzarina, was employed to circulate the prediction, on which, it is said, Alexis went abroad to wait for his father's death. The whole now transpired. The bishop and Glebof were taken into custody. The princess Mary's letters to Dozitheus, and

those of Helena to Glebof, were publicly read before the senate. The princess was confined in the fortress of Schlusselburg, and Euxodia removed to another convent, where she was kept a close prisoner. The priest and Glebof, with all the accomplices in this fruitless and superstitious intrigue, with others, who were privy to Alexis' escape,—his confessor, governor and marshal of his court—were all put to the torture, and several of them expired under it *.

"Thus," says Voltaire, "we see at what a dear rate did Peter the Great purchase the happiness which he procured to his people; how many public and private impediments he had to surmount, in the midst of a long and difficult war; with enemies abroad, rebels at home; half his family plotting against him; the majority of his priests obstinately declaring against his schemes; almost the whole nation, for a long time, execrating its own happiness, of which it had not then a proper sense; prejudices to overcome; discontents to allay; till, at length, a new generation, formed by his care, should close with those ideas of glory and prosperity, which their fathers could not bear."

* Voltaire.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Peace of Neustadt—Peter entreated to accept the Titles of *Emperor, Great,* and *Father of his Country*—Several New Institutions and Manufactories established — An Embassy sent to China—Assemblies, or *Soirées,* instituted—Peter's mode of living—Provides for the Succession.

The long-continued war between Russia and Sweden appeared, at length, to be drawing to a close. That arch-intriguer Goertz had concerted a grand plan, which was to reconcile Peter and Charles, drive George I. from the throne of England, and set the Pretender upon it, and to restore Stanislaus to that of Poland. The first hint of this project is supposed to have been suggested to Peter when he was last in Holland. Goertz knew that the Tzar had taken offence at Wismar being left to the king of Denmark, which, of right, belonged to the Duke of Mecklenburg, who had married his niece, and of this feeling he availed himself. It was supposed that the Tzar had an interview with him at the Hague, and the king of England remonstrated with him, but Peter satisfied him that it was not true. The plot, however, was laid and discovered by intercepted letters of Goertz in Holland, and Gyllemberg the Swedish minister in London, both of whom as well as

their papers were seized, one in London the other at Arnheim, and both were kept in confinement, like two criminals, for nearly six months.

The Tzar, however, was supposed to have listened to his projects, but without appearing to give to them much encouragement. He was, however, so far prevailed on as to send General Bruce and Osterman as plenipotentiaries to the island of Aland, where the conditions of peace were to be negociated. In the meantime, the Tzar kept a fleet at sea which captured the Swedish ships and committed depredations along the whole coast; but he evinced a willingness to listen to pacific overtures, by assenting to an exchange of certain officers of high rank, who had long been detained in the two countries as prisoners of war. To the complete success of Goertz's plan, which is not necessary here to be developed, Peter and Charles were required to enter into an offensive alliance, and a large combined army was to be landed in Scotland. Charles was to have the command of this invading force, destined to place the Pretender on the throne of England.

Just at this moment when Goertz and his confederates were, as Voltaire says, on the wished-for eve of throwing all Europe into universal confusion, a random shot from the works of Fredrikstadt, in Norway, quashed all their projects: Charles the XIIth was killed, and Goertz beheaded at Stockholm. The crown of Sweden was transferred to Ulrica Eleonora, sister of Charles XII., who was married a short time before to the hereditary Prince of Hesse. It is said that when Peter heard of the death of Charles, he could not

refrain from tears,—that he retired to conceal his weakness, and that, on rejoining the company he said in a mournful tone, "My dear Charles, how much I lament you *."

Shortly after the conclusion of these proceedings, on the 6th May 1719, the Tzar's only remaining son, Peter Petrovitz, who had been declared hereditary prince of Moscovy, departed this life at the age of five years, to the great grief of his parents, though his sickly constitution held out little or no hope he would ever arrive at manhood.

The affairs of Sweden underwent a complete change by the death of Charles; instead of uniting with the Tzar against England, the new government was most glad to unite its forces to England against the Tzar. The Swedes were desirous of peace, and hoped that the appearance of a British fleet in the Baltic might be the means of procuring for them a more advantageous one. In the meantime the Tzar kept the sea with a fleet of twelve sail of the line, several frigates and large galleys, of which he was second in command as Vice-Admiral under Admiral Apraxin. A smart engagement took place with a Swedish squadron, which ended in the Russians driving them into port and taking one ship of the line and two frigates. Just at this moment an English fleet, under Sir John Norris, made its appearance in the Baltic, for the protection of Sweden. Peter, nothing intimidated, determined to keep the sea; and sent a message to the English admiral, demanding, in a

* Stæhlin; authority, Wasselowski, privy councillor.

peremptory manner, whether he had come merely as a friend to Sweden, or as an enemy to Russia. The answer of the admiral was, that he had not yet received any orders to act for or against either power. The fact was, he was sent for no other purpose than to give confidence to Sweden, and thus to enable her probably to secure more advantageous terms of peace. This, however, had not the desired effect. Though the English fleet committed no act of hostility, yet its junction with that of Sweden exasperated the Russians, who made dreadful havoc on the coasts of that unfortunate country, burning many thousand houses and destroying copper and iron founderies, and other manufacturing buildings. On a descent made by them near Vasa, they burnt and destroyed forty villages, consisting of above a thousand houses, and spread desolation over the whole of that part of the country ; one account states, two towns, twenty-one castles or noblemen's houses, five hundred and thirty-five villages and hamlets, forty wells, sixteen magazines, and nine mines of iron. They destroyed corn and forage, and slew all the cattle and horses that they could not carry off; and to complete the misfortunes of the Swedes, Prince Galitzin attacked and carried four Swedish frigates. The destruction of the Swedish copper and iron works, the breaking down the mounds that preserved the mines from inundation, making the ruin irretrievable, entailed misery and want on thousands that had subsisted by them.

These devastations induced Sweden to demand a suspension of arms, and through the mediation of the Duke of Orleans, Regent of France, the

long-negociated reconciliation was brought about; a congress was held at Neustadt or Nystadt, in Finland, and the peace was concluded by ceding for ever to the Tzar all his conquests; thus leaving him sovereign over Livonia, Esthonia, Ingria, Carelia, Wyburg, and the adjacent islands, and securing to him the dominion of the sea of Finland, which, with the surrounding coasts, he had purchased with the toils and perils of twenty years. The peace of Neustadt was signed by his minister Osterman and General Bruce, on the 10th September, 1721.

By this peace Peter had now attained the summit of his glory. Nothing could surpass the joy which this event spread over the whole of Russia, the intelligence of which was forthwith despatched from one end of the empire to the other. Orders at the same time were sent to set at liberty all the Swedish prisoners in Siberia, and other remote provinces, offering those who might choose to remain the same rank in his army that they held in their own; requiring them only to make their voluntary declaration in presence of the chief Swedish officers, about to return, that it might not afterwards be said he had detained them contrary to their will, and the terms of the treaty. The generosity of Peter went so far as to give the strongest testimony and recommendation to those Swedish officers of whose valour and fidelity to their king and country he had been witness; and the new king of Sweden attended to these testimonials, promoting among others, Rear-Admiral Ehrenschild to the rank of full admiral; and Peter, on the departure of that gallant officer, with

whom he had been personally engaged in combat, made him a present of his picture set with diamonds. To the reformed Protestants of Riga he granted a church for the public exercise of their religion, which they could never obtain from the Swedish government; conferring other privileges for the encouragement of foreigners of that communion to settle there. He restored to the Livonians the privileges they had been deprived of in the two last reigns, for the defence of which the unhappy Patkul may be said to have died a martyr.

The Tzar appointed a day of public thanksgiving for the peace, a few days before which, he made a communication to the following effect to the senate, "That since it had pleased God to heap on him so many blessings, during the late burdensome and protracted war, and to grant a peace so glorious and so advantageous for the whole empire, it was incumbent on him as an act of justice and in acknowledgment of the great mercies he had received, to confer some favour on the nation; he therefore thought it right to direct that a general amnesty throughout the empire should be declared, not only for such whose crimes had deserved punishment, but to those who were under sentence; that all public debts owing by those who were unable to pay, be remitted; that all poor subjects be absolved from all arrears of taxes and imposts due to the treasury, up to the day of the proclamation of the peace." The senate, having hereupon most humbly thanked his Tzarish majesty, in the name of the whole nation, for his paternal clemency and tenderness towards his subjects, orders were imme-

diately despatched to set at liberty all persons in confinement in the prisons and the galleys, whether for debts or misdemeanors, or crimes of high-treason; those of robbery and murder only excepted.

The senate, after much deliberation with the heads of the church, came to a resolution that his majesty having acquired for the nation so much glory in the eyes of the whole world, should be entreated, as a token of acknowledgment on the part of his subjects, and after the example of other sovereigns, to accept and adopt the titles of "Peter the Great, Emperor of all the Russias, and Father of his Country;" praying him, in the name of all the states in the Russian empire, to permit them to make an offering of these titles for his acceptance, on the day of the celebration of the peace in the great cathedral. His majesty, after a considerable hesitation, at last consented; and, on the day in question, after divine service, the Archbishop of Plescow delivered a speech, in which he enumerated all the glorious exploits of his majesty, and the favours he had heaped on the nation and his subjects during his reign. Then the great chancellor, Count Golofkin, delivered a similar speech, in which, in the name of all the states of the empire, he humbly entreated the Tzar to accept the above-mentioned titles—stating that the title of EMPEROR was granted some ages ago to his majesty's illustrious ancestor by the great Roman Emperor Maximilian I.* That the title of GREAT his majesty had acquired by his

* In the archives of Russia is a despatch, bearing the date of 1514, ratified with the seal of the Golden Bull, in which Maxi-

heroic deeds; and, said he, as for the title of FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY, we have thought fit to give it to your majesty, as being our *Father*, whom God has been pleased to grant us, in his great goodness, without any merit of our own.

Then the whole senate thrice repeated, "*Long live Peter the Great, Emperor of all the Russias, and Father of his Country!*" and the whole assembly testified their applause, by the sound of trumpets and kettle-drums, and the roar of cannon from the ramparts, the admiralty, and one hundred and twenty-five galleys, which had arrived the same day and brought upwards of twenty thousand men who had been serving in Finland. In going out of the cathedral their imperial majesties were saluted with the acclamations of the people. They proceeded to the hall of the senate-house, where Prince Menzikoff and Count Apraxin declared the promotions of several military and naval officers, after which the assembly sat down to table, when more than a thousand persons of both sexes were entertained. The conduits in the street ran with wine; an ox was roasted whole and stuffed with fowls for the populace, and the night concluded with illuminations and fire-works. The rejoicing continued for fifteen days, during which were held five or six grand masquerades, in which the whole court bore a part.

The emperor had now leisure to look over those institutions and establishments which he had set on foot since the year 1718. In that year he

milian addresses Vassili Ivanovitch as *Kayser und Herrscher aller Russien—Emperor* and Ruler of all the Russias. —*Coxe.*

entirely new-modelled a general police for the empire; he commenced several projects for uniting rivers by means of canals; he prohibited games of chance which might be called gambling; he instituted orphan houses and a foundling hospital; he established a uniformity of weights and measures; and he endeavoured to settle, contrary to every principle of political economy, the prices of provisions, and a maximum to the luxury of dress: he caused the streets of Petersburg and Moscow to be paved, and cleared of swarms of beggars; and made several regulations for safety, order, and cleanliness. He took off the restriction of his subjects travelling abroad, but ordered all the young nobility to take their wives with them, to learn and bring back the manners and deportment of the more civilised courts of Europe; he not only proclaimed certain privileges for strangers settling in the country, but gave assurances against any abuse on the part of the natives of such privileges.

He established a large manufactory of small arms, which he attended frequently in person: and he encouraged the erection of corn, powder, and saw mills. He gave bounties to those who undertook the manufacture of woollen and linen cloth; and by this liberality he was soon enabled to clothe his army with home manufactures instead of purchasing them from Berlin and other places in Germany. He erected a board of mines, of which there were abundance, of iron, copper, gold, and silver, in his dominions, the duties of which board were chiefly to ascertain whether the produce would exceed the expense of working them.

The foreign trade of Russia with Europe, which had hitherto been carried on at Archangel, was now mostly transferred to Petersburg and Riga; that with Persia, consisting chiefly of silk, centred at Astracan, and was conducted by the Armenians, whom Peter encouraged to settle there. A trade between Siberia and China had existed long before the time of Peter the Great, by means of caravans, but it had more than once been interrupted; the last time in consequence of some insult committed by the people of the caravans against one of the vicars of the Lama, and even against the Chinese. It was, however, renewed; and the Emperor Kang-hee finding his health decline, and imagining that European physicians might be as much superior to the Chinese, as he had proved European astronomers to be, desired the conductor of the caravan to request the Tzar would send him a physician. Mr. Bell, of Antermony, who happened to be at that time at Petersburg, volunteered to go in that capacity, and to accompany Mr. Lange, both of whom have published accounts of their travels. The ambassador was well received; the surgeon found the emperor in good health; but the caravan, on its return, committed fresh outrages; which gave such umbrage to the emperor, that Lange, the Russian resident, was sent away from Pekin, together with all the Russian merchants. Peter succeeded in recovering this branch of trade, which was, however, to be confined to the frontiers of the two empires, and none but a certain number of Russians were to be admitted into Pekin. That trade still exists; and young

Russians are sent to Pekin to study the language, the better to conduct the trade on the frontiers; but while in the capital, they are confined within the walls of their residence.

On the Tzar's return to Moscow, he appointed a commission, of which Marshal Weyde was president, to inquire into certain abuses which had crept in during his absence. Among others was a charge against Prince Gagarin, governor of Siberia, of having, by means of Tartars, waylaid and robbed his Majesty's caravan, coming from China, and killing several of the persons conducting it; by which Gagarin had accumulated immense wealth. The proofs produced so clearly established his guilt, that he was committed to the fortress, till his Majesty's pleasure should be known. The Tzar visited him in prison, and told him if he would make a fair confession of the whole, he would, on the faith of his royal word, grant him a pardon. He pleaded guilty, and signed a confession which he made in writing. It was read before the senate, in the presence of Gagarin, who, on being asked if he acknowledged the act, said he was innocent of the crime, but that the Tzar had frightened him so much that he was forced to write and sign it against his will. The Tzar, who was present, was confounded, and the senators amazed. The Tzar at last said, he should have fair play for his life, and ordered the witnesses against him to be produced, at the head of whom appeared his own secretary, who proved the validity of the charges brought against him. The prince fell on his knees, and confessed he was unworthy of the royal clemency. The Tzar ordered a gallows, as high as Haman's,

fifty cubits, to be erected before the senate-house, on which he was hanged, in the presence of the whole of the senators, to many of whom he was related*.

In the midst of these weighty matters, which fell under his consideration, he was not unmindful of cultivating among his subjects a taste for literature and the fine arts. He sent several young Russians to Holland and Italy, some to be instructed in painting and others in architecture. On their return the painters embellished several churches, both at Petersburg and Moscow; and the architects were employed in building churches and palaces, and other public edifices. Of martial music he was particularly fond; and he attempted to introduce the Italian opera, but that, however, appears to have failed. Scenes like those exhibited on the marriage of his jester, Sotof, seemed, as yet, to be more congenial with the taste of the rude Muscovite.

The emperor had frequently endeavoured to bring the two sexes more frequently and publicly together, and had in some degree succeeded. He now instituted a regulation by which he should more effectually ensure this intercourse, by soireés or conversaziones, which he wisely judged was the first step to smooth down the roughness of, and give a polish to, his untutored countrymen. The regulations themselves show, in some degree, what the state of society was at that time. 1. A public notice was to be hung out at the house of assembly. 2. The company to assemble not sooner

* Bruce, Mottley, &c.

than five, nor continue later than ten. 3. The master of the house to find chairs, candles, liquors, and all necessaries that might be required; materials, as cards, &c. for gaming; but not obliged to attend to or wait on his guests. 4. Every one to come and go when he pleases, within the prescribed hours. 5. Every one to sit, walk, play, or converse, just as it suits him; any breach of etiquette to be punished, by the person committing it, with emptying the *great eagle*. 6. Noblemen, officers of state, of the army, and navy, respectable merchants and ship-builders, with their wives and children, to have liberty to frequent these assemblies. A particular place to be assigned to the servants.

These soirées are said to have been attended with the happiest effects, though the admission of such a mixed company was sometimes productive of rather awkward situations. The great propensity which the Russians generally had for strong liquors, the ladies as well as gentlemen, was occasionally indulged in to excess, and scenes occurred that would not be tolerated in civilised society. It required time to get rid of this gross indulgence, if it has yet been entirely eradicated; for it is stated, on very competent authority, that "intoxication is not disgraceful, and even among people of good condition, if a lady be overtaken in liquor it is no subject of reproach;" they are said to be "friendly, jovial, and courteous; boast of their friendship, and those that are not able to stand, find ready assistance from those who can*."

* Tooke's Russian Empire.

Peter in his youth was strongly addicted to the vice of drinking; but he had, for some years past, given it entirely up. He generally dined alone with Catharine, being waited on by a single page and a lady's maid. He would suffer no footman to remain in the room, except when he entertained company. He is reported to have said to the old Baron Mardfelt, the Prussian envoy, one day at table, "Hirelings and lacqueys never lose sight of their master's mouth: they are spies on all he says, misconstrue everything, and consequently report everything erroneously*."

The emperor deemed it right to give the inhabitants of the ancient capital a repetition of the entertainment which had taken place at Petersburg, in celebration of the glorious peace. As introductory to this, he made his triumphal entry into Moscow, at the head of his guards, and passed through four triumphal arches, at each of which he was complimented by the several authorities. And as Alexander has recorded in the hut where Peter resided at Zaandam, "To a great man nothing is little," the Emperor exhibited here many things that to a refined people would appear very trifling; but he had an object in view, and an end to attain in everything he did. Thus, among the fêtes, the balls, the masquerades, and other diversions, which lasted six weeks, was exhibited a little yacht completely rigged, of beautiful workmanship, splendidly gilt and painted, mounted with twelve small brass guns; it was placed on a sledge drawn by horses, in which the

* Stæhlin; authority, Baron Mardfelt's nephew.

emperor, the Duke of Holstein, and distinguished officers of the army and navy, to the number of twenty, dressed as seamen, drove for several days through the streets of Moscow, with colours flying and a band of martial music; and, on stopping at the house of some one of the great officers of state, where they were to dine, a salute was fired from the brass guns. The inhabitants, who had never seen the sea, were delighted with this show, which gave them a much better idea of what a ship of war was than otherwise they could have conceived, and so far the emperor's object was answered *.

Honest John Bell, whose testimony no one will doubt, and who was present, says, that after the galley came a frigate of sixteen small brass guns, completely rigged, manned with twelve youths, habited like Dutch skippers, in black velvet, who trimmed the sails and performed all the manœuvres as of a ship at sea. Then followed richly-decorated barges, wherein sat the empress and the ladies of the court. There were also pilot-boats heaving the lead, and above thirty other vessels, pinnaces, wherries, &c., each filled with masqueraders in the dresses of different nations. All this was in the month of February, when the ground was covered with snow. The sledge, on which the large ship was, required above forty horses to draw it. Thus did this extraordinary man endeavour to apprise his inland subjects of Moscow, who had an aversion to maritime affairs, in what a marine consisted, from which they had derived such great advantages †.

* Bruce's Memoirs. † Bell's Travels in Russia.

As Moscow was the residence of great numbers of the ancient boyars, and the head-quarters of the clergy, who had not as yet reconciled themselves to the bold church-reforms of the Emperor, Peter thought it expedient to repeat, among the various diversions, one of those masquerades, or carnivals which, by a farcical exaggeration, turned into ridicule the bushy-beards, and long-coats, and rude customs and ceremonies, to which many of the people were still attached. The emperor knew enough of human nature to be convinced, that raillery might succeed where severity failed to correct slight abuses and unseemly habits, and that they may be

Touch'd and shamed by ridicule alone.

He found it absolutely necessary to restrain the clergy, who, by inculcating old usages and superstitious notions, carried the bulk of the people along with them, in opposition to his measures of reform. Russia had long been deluged with priests, monks, and nuns. From the first introduction of the Greek church, Muscovy had been a fertile soil for these unproductive drones. In Hakluyt's Collection of Voyages is a descriptive account of this country in verse, by Master George Turbervile, long before the time of Peter, pithy if not poetic, in which the writer says,—

The cold is rare, the people rude, the prince so full of pride,
The realm so stor'd with monks and nunnes, and priests on every side,—
The manners are so Turkie-like, the men so full of guile,
The women wanton, temples stufft with idols that defile,
The seats that sacred ought to be, the customs are so quaint,
As if I would describe the whole, I feare my pen would faint *.

* Hakluyt's Voyages.

In the thinly peopled state of Russia, Peter thought it bad policy to encourage the celibacy of monks and nuns; and, therefore, to put a stop to young men and women cloistering themselves, in order to live in idleness, at the public expense, and contribute nothing to the public good, he ordained that none of either sex should be admitted to a monastic life at a less age than fifty—declaring, as the ground-work of his reformation, that 'he should think himself guilty of ingratitude to the Most High, if, after having reformed the civil and military order, he neglected the spiritual.' But, in appointing himself Head of the church, he did not think it necessary to commence deacon, and go through all the gradations of church preferments as he had done in the army and navy: these required encouragement and example; but those were considered to want the curb rather than the spur.

Having lost his last remaining son and heir, Peter, with the advice of his council, thought it expedient to settle the question of succession; as the future prosperity of the great empire, which he may be said to have created, depended on the choice of a sovereign who should tread in his steps, and perfect the vast designs which he had commenced,—the main objects of which were, to rescue his people from the barbarous ignorance in which he found them, and to place the Russian empire on an equality with other European nations, in all the acquirements of a civilised society. Public notice was therefore given by sound of trumpet, that all officers, civil and military, and all natural-born subjects, inhabiting the

capital, should repair to the Kremlin; and here his Majesty's pleasure was signified, that each and every man should swear to bear firm allegiance to the person whom it might please his Imperial Majesty to declare his successor, and acknowledge that person as emperor and sovereign of all the Russias. It was not in the least known on whom the succession was meant to be conferred; but Bruce, who had to administer the oath throughout one of the parishes, says, "the order struck a damp on the spirits of every body, when they reflected on the undoubted title of the young prince Peter, his Majesty's grandson, and only remaining male heir of the imperial family; who was as promising and hopeful a young prince as any of his age could possibly be. This duty," he says, "took me no less than five weeks close attendance from daylight in the morning till late at night by candles: "this," he adds, "was to me the most disagreeable service I ever performed in Russia, as I was so well acquainted with the excellent temper and genius of the young prince, having had the honour to teach him the military exercises and fortification, and to whose prejudice this oath was certainly administered*."

This, it will be admitted, was a proper feeling on the part of Bruce, who was the young prince's drill-master; but the views of Peter and the situation in which the country would be placed, in the event of his death, demanded that he should put himself above all family considerations. By the death of Alexis, who was as weak in intellect as

* Bruce's Memoirs.

wicked in disposition, the progressive regeneration of Russia was in some degree secured: no focal point was now left for the 'bushy beards' and disaffected boyars to rally round; but Peter knew very well that he had only

——— scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it;

and that, without a firm hand to guide the reins, and to watch attentively the movements of the wounded animal, she would "close and be herself again." The same sentiment might occur to him as to a great master of human nature—"Woe unto the land that is governed by a child!" or, as the Scripture has it, "whose princes are children."

CHAPTER XIV.

Peter directs his Views towards Persia—Failure of the Expedition—Trial and Punishment of certain Delinquents—Celebration of the "Little Grandsire," the first germ of the Russian Navy.

By the treaty which the Emperor of all the Russias had concluded with the Sublime Porte, and by which he had agreed to abandon Azoph and his establishments on the Palus Mœotis, he found himself completely shut out from the navigation and commerce of the Black Sea; which, however, at that time, considering the jealousy and the great power of the Turk, and that he held possession of the whole of the coasts of that sea, could not have been of much importance to the advancement of his commercial prospects. His fleet, therefore, at Voronitz and on the Don, on which he had expended so much money, had now become of little use. It was not likely, however, that a mind like his, ever on the stretch in looking out for something new, and constantly employed on one scheme or another for the aggrandisement of his empire, and the benefit of his subjects, could long remain at rest, now that the country was restored to a state of profound peace. It was very natural, therefore, that his attention should be drawn towards the Caspian Sea, on which the Russians, under his father, Alexis Michaelovitch, had followed, for a

time with some perseverance, the steps first pursued by our English adventurous merchants. This trade of the Russians, however had been ere long annihilated by a rebellion of the Cossacks of the Don ; after which the Persian commerce was chiefly carried on at Astracan by Armenian merchants.

An opportunity now offered, which the Emperor was not disposed to neglect, of renewing the intercourse with the coasts of the Caspian Sea. The Shah of Persia, Hussein, who succeeded to the throne in the year 1694, was an indolent and effeminate prince, who spent the greater part of his time in the seclusion of the haram, while the Tartars, the Mongols, and Afghans were laying waste his provinces. At length the Afghan prince, Meer Mahmoud, invaded Persia on one side, with an immense army, while the Lesgians, on the other, descending from the mountains of the Caucasus, entered Shirvan, one of its most valuable provinces ; they pillaged the whole country, and took possession of the city of Schamachie, putting the inhabitants to the sword, among whom were about three hundred Russians, settled there in trade. Mahmoud carried his conquests to Ispahan, and compelled the Shah to declare him his prime minister, and the protector of Persia.

Peter had therefore two powerful motives for turning his attention towards Persia. The first was to inflict vengeance on the Lesgians for the pillage and massacre of his subjects on the western shores of the Caspian, and also to demand satisfaction of the usurper Mahmoud, as the ally of the Usbecks, who had plundered his caravan from China ; and the second was to see how matters

stood between Shah Hussein and Mahmoud. But the real and ultimate object of his intended expedition was the establishment of an advantageous commerce, the aim and end of all his enterprises. Peter sought not for any extent of dominion. On this very occasion he said to Prince Cantimir, who was talking with him on the ease with which conquests were to be made in Persia, 'It is not land that I want, but sea.'

The Caspian was not unknown to Peter. He had more than once sent expeditions to sound its waters and survey its coasts; and he had forwarded to the Royal Academy of Sciences, at Paris, a copy of a chart of these, made under his directions. The avowed object of the first expedition was to discover the mouth of the river Daria, or the Amouderia, a branch of the Oxus, which now falls into the sea of Aral, but which it is intimated *then* fell into the Caspian, its current having been since turned by the Usbecks. Later discoveries have not confirmed this, though it has been thought probable that the shifting of the sandy surface may have given new directions to the streams that now fall into the sea of Aral. Be that as it may, the Russians had orders to go up towards the source of this river, in order to discover the mines of gold said to exist on its shores. It is stated that those who were sent not only brought back specimens of gold, but found, at a considerable distance in the interior, a large stone building, half buried in sand, within which were presses of a hard black wood, containing nearly three thousand volumes of books, of which, with great difficulty, they were allowed to bring away three,

the people considering both the building and the books as sacred monuments. The sheets are stated to resemble the bark of trees, the characters were in horizontal lines, but whether they were to be read from right to left, or from left to right, no one could tell. They were supposed to be Calmuc or Mongol. The Tzar, it seems, considered them as a precious treasure. They found also, in the burying places of the Calmucs, several small brass statues, among which was one of a Roman general crowned with laurel, two figures of men on horseback, with armour similar to that worn in the west in the twelfth century, and several Indian and Chinese Idols, all of which the Tzar placed in his cabinet. This description applies, no doubt, to the ruins of Ourgantz, situated on an ancient branch of the Oxus.

John Bell, of Antermony, who accompanied Dr. Blumentrost, the emperor's chief physician, on the present Persian expedition, mentions a similar building on the banks of the Irtish, called *Sedmy-palatz*, or Seven Palaces, several of the rooms of which were filled with scrolls of glazed paper, some black, but mostly white, written in the Calmuc language. Some of these Tartars stated that the building was erected by Tamerlane, others by Gengis-Khan. The Tzar followed up the inquiry as to the ruins of Ourgantz, by sending Prince Bekewitz, with a considerable number of troops, to visit the eastern shores of the Caspian, and to open a communication with the inhabitants of the intermediate country and Bokhara. The Prince proceeded into the interior, after building a fort, in which he was arrested by the natives. They

carried him to the encampment of the khan of the Turcomans, who received him kindly ; and having suffered greatly on his way thither for want of water, he was persuaded, on his return, to divide his escort into small parties. When they had all departed except the last, with whom was Bekewitz, the Turcomans fell upon them and cut them all to pieces. The rest were murdered in detail, with the exception of a few who had been left to take charge of the fort.

The Emperor had now, therefore, abundant motives for an expedition to the Caspian, which he resolved to take the command of in persou. He had besides received an insulting message from Mahmoud, to whom he had sent an ambassador, and had received, about the same time, repeated entreaties from Shah Hussein, the deposed monarch, imploring his Majesty's aid against the usurper. His first object was to send down the Wolga to Astracan as many galleys and transports as would carry 30,000 men.

John Bell relates that, when the Emperor reached Saratoff on the Wolga, he appointed an interview with Ayuka-Khan, king of the Calmucs, who had pitched his tents on the east bank of that river. Ayuka and his queen were invited to dine on board the emperor's galley. He came on horseback, attended by his two sons and a troop of about fifty of his officers, all exceedingly well mounted. As he advanced, the emperor went on shore, saluted him, and taking him by the hand, conducted him on board the galley, where he introduced him to the Empress, who was seated under an awning on the quarter-deck.

The queen soon followed in a covered wheel-machine, attended by her daughter and two ladies and a troop of horsemen. The emperor went through the same ceremony as with the khan, and introduced her to the empress. The khan was a hearty and cheerful old man about seventy; his queen fifty,—of a decent and cheerful deportment. The emperor intimated that he wished for ten thousand of his troops to accompany him into Persia. The khan replied that ten thousand were at his service, but thought five thousand would be quite enough and less inconvenient; and he not only gave orders for their march, but they joined the emperor on the shores of the Caspian, at the time and place appointed. 'Thus,' says John Bell, 'this treaty between two mighty monarchs was begun, carried on, and concluded, in less space of time than is usually employed by the plenipotentiaries of our western European monarchs in taking dinner.' The empress gave the queen a gold repeating-watch set with diamonds, besides some pieces of brocade and other silks of value*. The preparations being all ready at Astracan, the expedition was joined by the emperor and his consort, and on the 18th July, the army, consisting of 33,000 men of those warlike veterans, who had been engaged so long with the Swedes, embarked on board two hundred and fifty galleys, attended by thirty-five store and hospital ships, under the command of Admiral Apraxin. On

* Bell's Travels in Russia.—It is somewhat remarkable that Bruce never once mentions this highly respectable author and countryman as having formed a part of this expedition.

sailing down the western coast, one of the divisions lost sight of the admiral, and were obliged to anchor, having, as Bruce says, 'neither pilot nor compass on board;' an inconvenience, it seems, under which the greater part of the fleet laboured. While at Bustroff, his Majesty received intelligence from General Waterung that he had burnt and destroyed the capital city of the province, laid waste the whole country, and carried off all the inhabitants that he could meet with, old and young of both sexes, amounting to many thousands.

Having passed the island of Trenzini, the high mountains of the Caucasus opened out, appearing to hide their heads in the clouds. On the 28th the whole army landed at the mouth of the river Agrechan, and after much difficulty hauled their galleys up on the shore. Here the Circassian and Daghistan Tartars brought their little waggons, horses, camels, and oxen for sale, and knowing the necessity the Russians had for them, they demanded six times their value. In their march to the Sulak, the heat was so intolerable that many of the men dropped by the way. Nor was this all; Mr. Bell says, "that he observed, among the abundance of grass, great quantities of a certain herb, called Roman wormwood, which the hungry horses greedily devoured; and next morning they found about five hundred of them dead, on which the Kalmucs, who had just joined them, feasted for several days." Here the chief of the Daghistan Tartars welcomed his Imperial Majesty into his territories, and promised him all kinds of assistance and refreshments for the army. Such

quantities of grapes, melons, pomegranates, and other fruits were brought to the camp, and devoured by the men so voraciously, as to bring on fevers and fluxes. General Waterung here joined the army, bringing with him the chief of Andreof whom the emperor ordered to be hanged the same day. This gave such offence to the people of Daghistan, that they determined to make reprisals on the Russians.

Accordingly, numbers of armed men on horseback were now seen moving along the skirts of the mountains. The Tzar, riding along the guards, asked the men if their muskets were loaded; being answered in the negative, he gave orders to load, summoned the officers of his division to assemble at the head of the grenadier company, "where," says Bruce, "he reprimanded us severely for neglect of duty; our swords were taken from us and put into a wagon; the field officers were ordered to march on foot in one rank, the captains formed in three ranks behind them, and every officer was loaded with four heavy muskets on his shoulders. In this posture we marched nearly two hours, in the most intolerable heat, when the empress, being informed of our miserable situation, came up in her chariot with the utmost haste, and pleaded so effectually in our favour, that we were released from our heavy burdens, had our swords restored, and were admitted to kiss his Majesty's hand; who told us that he had only punished the officers of his own guards, because they ought to give a good example to all the rest of the army *."

* Bruce's Memoirs.

It is admitted that Peter never spared himself in this campaign. During the march, he rode generally an English pad, about fourteen hands high, for which he had a particular liking, as it was very tractable and easy to mount; but he very often walked. His dress, when on a march, was a white nightcap, with a plain flapped hat over it, and a short dimity waistcoat; but when any deputation or chieftain waited on him, he always received them in his regimentals, as colonel of the guards. His abstemiousness was proverbial. Mr. Bell says, "about midnight, after a harassing day among the hostile mountaineers, I went into the tent of Mr. Felton, his Majesty's principal cook, where he was alone, with a large saucepan of warm grout before him, made of buck-wheat with butter, which he told me was the remains of their Majesties' supper, who ate of nothing else that evening, and who were just gone to bed *."

At Tarku, the principal city of Daghistan, Captain Bruce says "the ladies are incomparably beautiful, both in feature and shape. A great number of those, of the highest rank and fashion, paid a visit to her Majesty in her tent, where they squatted themselves down on their Persian carpets cross-legged. Catharine, with her usual kindness, desired that the officers should be admitted to see the ladies, so that when one set had gratified their curiosity, they should retire and make way for others. The visit was prolonged till late, when these fair females got into their

* Bell's Travels.

close carriages and were escorted back by torch-light."

At Baku and Derbent his Majesty was greeted by the governors and the principal citizens, the latter of whom presented him with the keys of their city, offering to admit his troops into the citadel to garrison it for the protection of the place, which had long defended itself against the arms of the usurper Mahmoud. Thirteen provision-ships from Astracan arrived at a place ten or twelve miles to the southward of Derbent, when a furious storm arose, which drove ashore and beat to pieces the whole of them, burying them entirely in the sand; but the men were all saved.

While the Tzar remained at Derbent he received several messages,—some from the Sophi of Persia, some from the Georgians, and others from the inhabitants of Schamachie, Baku, and Resht, all imploring him to march with his army against the usurper, and each offering to give up their several cities to him. Just, however, as the army was on the point of marching to the south, a Turkish envoy arrived at the camp, giving information that the Grand Seignior, his master, had taken possession of Schamachie, and that the Porte was surprised his Majesty should invade his territories while peace subsisted between them; the preservation of which rendered it absolutely necessary that he should immediately withdraw his army from that district. There was some justice in this; and the emperor, who appears not to have weighed well this matter when he undertook the expedition, now saw and admitted that

the Turk had reason to complain; and what was perhaps of greater moment to himself, he considered how rash and impolitic it would be to commence a war with this powerful neighbour, at a moment when he was at so great a distance from his own country with the flower of his army: he resolved therefore to trace backwards his steps forthwith, recommending the provinces oppressed by the usurper to put themselves under the protection of the Turks.

He was unwilling, however, that this costly expedition should be thought nugatory; and therefore, on the return of the army, he ordered a strong fortress and town to be erected at the point where the Agrechan and Sulak divide their waters, to which he gave the name of *Swetago-Krest*, or Holy Cross; and this fortress laid the foundation of the future progress of the Russians on the northern side of the Caucasian mountains.

Nor did the failure of this expedition induce Peter the Great to give up his views on the Caspian. Bruce, who had wintered at Tzaritzee on the Wolga, was ordered, in April 1723, to accompany a small force to proceed down the eastern shore of the Caspian, and to survey the gulfs, harbours and rivers. They circumnavigated the whole of the Caspian; and on their return by the western coast, Bruce visited the new works and town of Holy Cross, which had increased in wooden houses to such an extent as to afford quarters for the whole of their little army. In the spring of 1724, Bruce arrived at Moscow, and laid his chart of the Caspian before his Ma-

jesty, who appeared to be much pleased with what had been done *.

Whenever the emperor had occasion to be absent from either of his two capitals, for any length of time, it would seem to have been his fate, on his return, that the congratulations and rejoicings of his subjects should be mixed up with some dreadful act of severity on his part. Indeed the whole course of his life may be said to have been a series of sudden transitions from the opposite extremes of mirth and sorrow; of a constant round of vicissitudes, which, not always "happily," compelled him

"To steer
From grave to gay, from lively to severe."

But, with a vigour of mind and body seldom equalled, and never perhaps exceeded, he seems to have set out, from the moment he had sole possession of the throne, with a fixed determination, *per fas et nefas*, to accomplish one great point,—the regeneration of his country; and this may be considered, under all the circumstances, as one of the noblest designs that ever entered the head or heart of man. For this he submitted to toil through every condition of life, however laborious; exposed himself to every hardship that the lowest of mankind are subject to, whether by sea or land; and, invested as he was with supreme and arbitrary power, to content himself to rise by degrees through every subordinate rank, for the sake of example to others. It is not surprising then,

* Bruce's Memoirs.

however much it is to be lamented, that he was sometimes driven to acts of great severity.

On the present occasion of his return to Moscow, several offenders of high rank, in official situations, were brought to trial before a competent tribunal, and were sentenced to undergo various punishments,—the knout, the battogues, fine, and imprisonment. Among the delinquents was one whom the emperor could have least suspected, and whose conduct gave him the greatest pain; a man whom his Majesty had raised, for his merit and superior talent, from the humble situation of a clerk in chancery, to be his vice-chancellor and prime minister,—the Baron Schafirof. Five different charges were exhibited against him.—1. That he had conferred on his brother a title and appointment, unknown to the Emperor and the senate. 2. That he had signed and issued certain orders and instruments unknown to the senate, and without having them registered. 3. That in his capacity of the posts, he had, of his own authority, increased the postage of letters, and kept the money to himself. 4. That he had concealed two hundred thousand ducats in specie, and to the value of seventy thousand more in jewels, belonging to Prince Gagarin, although he himself had signed the order of the emperor, commanding every one who knew anything of the effects of that criminal, to make discovery of them. 5. That he had used opprobrious language to some of the senators, in full senate, which was forbidden on pain of death.

Being found guilty on these charges, he was sentenced to be beheaded. On the evening pre-

ceding the day of execution, public notice of it was proclaimed by sound of trumpet, in consequence of which an immense crowd was assembled the following morning before the senate-house, when Baron Schafirof was led to the scaffold, accompanied by two priests who had been preparing him for death. His sentence was read aloud, which he heard with great resignation; and having laid his head on the block, the instant the executioner lifted up the axe, a herald cried out—"Mercy to the criminal for his life, by command of his Imperial Majesty." On this he was removed from the scaffold and taken back to the prison of Preobrazinski. The emperor, in consideration of his past services, commuted his sentence of death into that of perpetual banishment into Siberia, with confiscation of all his property.

Delinquencies of this kind, committed by his trusty servants, occasioned great annoyance to the emperor, who, however, rarely interfered with the sentence of the proper tribunal. In the present instance, the punishment was understood to have been commuted at the solicitation of Catharine, who entertained a high respect for Schafirof, a strong proof of which she gave by recalling him from banishment after the death of the emperor. He was, in fact, her principal agent in the business of the Pruth.

Mr. Bell who claims for himself, what has universally been ceded to him, the right of being believed, on the ground that he shall say nothing of fact but what is true, nor anything of opinion but what is sincere—Mr. Bell says, that "several

foreign writers have misrepresented and traduced the real character of Peter the Great, by relating mean stories, most of them without the least ground of truth, whereby many people of good understanding have been misled, and even to this present time look on him to have been a vicious man, and a cruel tyrant, than which nothing could be more the reverse of his true character." He adds that, many years after his death, he has heard officers talk of their old father Peter the Great, yet he never heard one of them produce a single instance of his having punished an honest man, or practised severity on any one that had not deserved it *.

In the month of March, 1723, the emperor set out for Petersburg, whither the empress and the whole court followed. He had sent notice to the clergy there, previous to his setting out, that he had heard of their treatment of, and disputes with, the members of the reformed church who had been encouraged to settle in that capital. He told them he expected that he should not be troubled with any grievances or complaints on that score after his arrival; and that they must know he considered all the Protestant families equally entitled to his protection and benevolence with themselves.

The emperor had just now a double motive for visiting Petersburg; the one was to found an Imperial Academy of Sciences; the other to erect a memorial to the Russian people of the services which the nation had acquired by the establish-

* Bell's Travels.

ment of a navy. Peter had no doubt, during his travels, observed the advantage of public societies for the promotion of literature, and more particularly had in his mind the Academie des Sciences of Paris, of which he was a member. He drew the plan of it himself, which was signed in February, 1724, but did not live to carry it into execution. His decease, however, did not prevent its completion; which was left to the Empress Catharine, who, on the 1st August, 1726, honoured the meeting with her presence, when Professor Bulfinger, an eminent German naturalist, pronounced an oration on the advances made by means of the loadstone and needle for the discovery of the longitude. The empress settled an annual fund of 5000*l.* for the support of the Academy; and fifteen members, eminent for learning and talents, were admitted and pensioned, under the title of "professors" in the various branches of literature and science. It was strongly patronised in the reigns of Anne and Elizabeth, and Catharine II. fixed it on a durable basis. Expeditions were sent out to every part of the world, but to Asia in particular. "In consequence of which," says a recent writer, "perhaps no country can boast, within the space of a few years, such a number of excellent publications on its internal state, natural productions, topography, geography and history,—on the manners, customs and languages of the different people,—as have issued from the press of the academy *."

The next object that engaged the emperor's

* Coxe's Travels.

attention, as may be readily conceived, was the state of the dock-yards and his ships of war; and, after selecting a certain number to be kept in commission for practising his seamen in the summer months, as well as to awe the Danes and Swedes, he laid down regulations for preserving the rest of his fleet in a state of ordinary. After this he went down to Cronstadt, hoisted his flag, and set sail with the ostensible view of threatening Denmark, who had refused to acknowledge his title of Emperor, and to compel her to relinquish the *Sound* duties on Russian vessels, and also to restore to the Duke of Holstein his possessions, which had been seized in the course of the war; but the real object was nothing more than that of exercising his fleet in the gulf of Finland, from which service he returned to Petersburg on the 8th August.

"Nothing is too little to a great man." In any other sovereign than Peter the Great, several of his actions would be set down as frivolous whims, childish diversions, and ludicrous absurdities; and even in him they might so be considered, if the whole tenor of his life had not proved, that he had a salutary motive in everything of this kind which he put in practice. Of this he now gave a striking instance.

It may be recollected, as mentioned in the early part of this memoir, that the first boat in which Peter set his foot was a little skiff he had accidentally cast his eye upon, in the river Yausa at Moscow, and the first of the kind that was built in Russia by a Dutch shipwright of the name of Brandt; that, from having acquired the manage-

ment of this boat, he ordered Brandt to build him a larger, and thus proceeding from step to step, he went on building larger and larger until he had acquired a formidable navy ships of the line. This first little boat was cherished with great care at Moscow, and was named by Peter the "Little Grandsire." It was now transported from Moscow to his new capital, as the more appropriate place for its future preservation. And in order to signalise the event of laying up, as a monument to posterity, which might remind the Russian people from what a small beginning great things were capable of being accomplished, even in the short space of one man's life, he availed himself of the occasion to give a grand public entertainment, to which all the court and foreign ministers were invited to be present at *The consecration of the Little Grandsire.* This little skiff, decorated for the occasion, was sent down to Cronstadt on the deck of one of the emperor's galleys. Twenty-seven sail of ships of war being anchored in the form of a crescent, the emperor embarked in this boat, as steersman, while Prince Menzikoff and three admirals performed the office of rowers. It was first towed out by two yachts, and made a small circuit in the gulf; and on returning to the view of the fleet, all the ships saluted with all their guns, to the number, as stated in one account, of three thousand; and on rowing along the concave line of the fleet, every ship in succession struck its colours and fired a salute, which was answered by the little skiff by firing three small brass guns to each ship. It was then rowed into the harbour, and a few days afterwards was sent up to Petersburg, where its arrival

was solemnised by a grand fête and masquerade upon the water.

This memorable little boat of four oars is still held in great veneration, and carefully preserved in a small brick building, within the fortress, as a memorial to future ages of its being the origin of the Russian navy. The consecration of the Little Grandsire and the solemn procession by which it was afterwards conveyed to the fortress, were well calculated to excite the admiration of the people; and by its being carefully kept, but always exposed to view, to remind them of the condition in which Peter found their marine, and the proud state in which he left it. At this time the fleet, which Peter may be said to have left as a legacy to the Russian nation, consisted, according to the returns of the admiralty, of forty-one ships of the line, in a condition for service at sea, carrying two thousand one hundred and six guns, manned with fourteen thousand nine hundred seamen, besides a proportionate number of frigates, galleys, and other smaller craft*.

* Scheltema.

CHAPTER XV.

The Coronation of Catharine—Sickness and Death of Peter the Great—His Character and Epitaph.

PETER the Great, being now at peace with all the world, determined to give to his people a signal proof of his affection and gratitude for his beloved consort Catharine, by causing her to be solemnly crowned as empress, in the ancient city of Moscow —a public mark of esteem, which the whole nation was ready to acknowledge as her due; for whatever opinions many of the old nobility and the clergy, who adhered to ancient usages, might entertain of the emperor's innovations, the conduct of Catharine, under every circumstance of her life, had gained for her universal esteem. It was the custom of Peter, whenever he was about to undertake any great measure, to assign his reasons for it in a public manifesto. That which he issued on the present occasion sets out with stating, what he observes no one can be ignorant of, that the custom of crowning their spouses was common among many Christian monarchs of the true Greek religion for ages past; and he cites several instances in which it was done. He then observes, it is well known how much he has exposed his own person and faced the most imminent dangers for the sake of his dear country, in the course of a war of twenty years' duration, which

by the help of God, had now terminated in a manner honourable, glorious, and advantageous for the Russian empire. And he then goes on to say, " The empress Catharine, our dearest consort, was an important help to us in all these dangers, not in war alone, but in other expeditions, in which she voluntarily accompanied us, serving us with her able counsel, notwithstanding the natural weakness of her sex; more particularly at the battle of the Pruth, where our army was reduced to twenty-two thousand men, while the Turks were two hundred and twenty thousand strong. It was in this desperate circumstance, above all others, that she signalised her zeal, by a courage superior to her sex, as is well known to the whole army throughout the empire. For these reasons, and in virtue of that power which God has given us, we are resolved to honour our spouse with the imperial crown, in acknowledgement for all her services and fatigues."

Magnificent preparations were ordered to be made at Moscow for this grand and imposing ceremony. The foreign ministers were all invited to be present; and orders were given that all necessary preparations should be made for the conveyance of themselves and their establishments from Petersburg to Moscow. The Duchess of Courland, daughter of Peter's elder brother, and the Duke of Holstein, his intended son-in-law, were present at the ceremony.

From the descriptions that are given in detail, by various writers, nothing could exceed the magnificence and splendour that appeared in the two cathedrals, and the richness of the dresses,

and the whole paraphernalia that were exhibited in the processions. When the assembly were all in their places in the grand cathedral, the Archbishop of Novogorod, advancing towards the empress, requested her to repeat aloud the creed of the orthodox faith, in the presence of her loyal subjects, which being done she knelt on a cushion, and received the archbishop's benediction, who consecrated her with the sign of the cross, and laying his hands on her, recited a prayer in which he says, "Look down from thy holy dwelling-place on high, and render worthy of thy sacred unction our great and orthodox Empress Catharine Alexowna, whom thou hast chosen to be the sovereign lady and ruler over thy people, and whom thou hast redeemed by the precious blood of thy only Son. Invest her with power; crown her with a precious diadem; grant her long life; put the sceptre of salvation into her hands; place her on the throne of justice; defend her with the armour of the Holy Spirit; make her arm strong; put all infidel nations under her dominion; let her heart be always inclined to fear thee, and her will be always obedient to thine; let her judge thy people righteously, do justice to the afflicted, relieve the children of the poor; and let her at last obtain thy heavenly kingdom."

In the course of the ceremony, Peter himself robed Catharine in the imperial mantle, and placed the crown on her head; and when she would have fallen on her knees he raised her; and at the conclusion the sceptre and globe were carried before her. In the procession to the cathedral the emperor walked before her on foot, as

captain of a new company, which he expressly created on that occasion, with the name of the *Knights of the Empress.* The dresses of this company of knights are described by Bruce as most splendid. In proceeding to the second cathedral, Prince Menzikoff walked immediately behind the empress, supported by two officers of state, each carrying a splendid purse containing medals of gold and silver, which the prince scattered among the people. At the conclusion of the ceremony a grand entertainment was served up; and balls, masquerades, fire-works and illuminations were continued for three days.

In commemoration of this event the emperor resolved on a promotion in the army and navy; and though his selection had hitherto always been made solely for merit, and had answered well, on this occasion, for the first time, he wished to have the opinion of the officers on the subjects of his choice, to be declared by a species of ballot. The first on his list was Brigadier Knees Usupof, a major in the guards, for promotion to the rank of major-general. The officers of his regiment entitled to ballot were 84; each had three balls, one for, or deserving, the second against, or undeserving, and the third indicating incapacity. The result was, for the first, 23; for the second, 32; and for the third, 29. His majesty was utterly confounded, as everybody knew the major to be a most able and gallant officer; but the result determined him to think no more of that hypocritical system of balloting, being satisfied, no doubt, as every honest man must be, that it only affords the covert and cowardly means of

gratifying, and carrying into practical effect, feelings of envy, hatred, and malice, without the risk of detection.

In the same year was celebrated the marriage of the emperor's eldest daughter, Anne Petrowna, with the Duke of Holstein Gottorp,—a "princess," says Coxe, citing Bassewitz, "of majestic form and expressive features, of an excellent and improved understanding, and of irreproachable morals. While she was very young, Count Apraxin, a Russian nobleman, paid his addresses to her, but was rejected with scorn. Not daunted with this repulse, he continued his courtship, and, finding her one day alone, threw himself at her feet, offered his sword, and entreated her to put an end to his life and misery. 'Give me the sword,' said the princess, stretching out her hand, 'you shall see that the daughter of your emperor has strength and spirit sufficient to rid herself of a wretch who insults her.' The count apprehending that she might execute her threat, withdrew the sword, and demanded instant pardon; and as the princess told the story with great humour, he became the derision of the court*."

The rejoicings being finished which took place on this occasion, the emperor and court repaired to Petersburg. The emperor's health had for some time been giving way: he had a strangury in the neck of the bladder, which he concealed from his medical attendants, till in the summer of 1724 the symptoms became dangerous and attended with insupportable pain. When at length Dr.

* Coxe's Travels in Russia.

Bloumentrost was made acquainted with the case, he saw at once the danger, and sent express for Dr. Bedloo, a celebrated physician of Moscow; and Mr. Horn, an English surgeon, was called in to make use of the catheter. Peter in this condition was prevailed on to keep his room for nearly four months, after which, finding the pain abated and his strength increased, he gave orders for his yacht to be made ready and brought up the Neva opposite to his palace. He then acquainted Dr. Bloumentrost that he meant to go up to Schlusselburg, and visit the works on lake Ladoga, and ordered him to attend him. The doctor remonstrated in the strongest terms against such an imprudent step, but Peter was resolved; and the doctor, with Mr. Paulson the surgeon, and Liphold the apothecary, embarked to attend him. The voyage commenced the beginning of October, and continued till the 5th of November, not without occasional symptoms of his complaint returning.

Feeling himself well enough to remain on the water, and the weather continuing fine, instead of landing, he proceeded to Lachta, on the gulf of Finland. He had scarcely anchored in port, when a boat, full of soldiers and sailors, was seen to be dashed on the rocks by the violence of the waves. Peter ordered out one of the small vessels to their assistance; but with that ardour and impatience inherent in his character, thinking the men sent did not sufficiently exert themselves, he took to his own boat, but not being able to advance near enough on account of a sand-bank, he waded up to the knees in water to get at the boat that

was aground, and by his able assistance effected the safety of the poor people. At night he was seized with a fever and painful inflammation of the abdomen. He was immediately conveyed to Petersburg, was pronounced dangerously ill, and from that time his old complaint made hasty progress from day to day. In the beginning of December his situation was so alarming, and the symptoms of an inflammation in the intestines and bladder so evident, that a gangrene was apprehended. Acute and continual pain indicated the emperor's approaching death, to which he resigned himself with heroic firmness, and expired on the 28th January, 1725*.

Voltaire says, "The burning heat within him kept him almost in a continual delirium. He was once for availing himself of a short interval of ease, by writing; but the letters were so confused and out of shape that, after much difficulty, only these words in the Russian language could be deciphered, *Restore all to* ——. He called for the Princess Anne Petrowna to dictate to her; but when she presented herself before his bed, he had lost the use of his speech, and soon after fell into an agony, which lasted sixteen hours."

This account is taken from the Memoirs of Count Bassewitz, the minister of the Duke of Holstein, which is not the only improbable story he has amused the world with on the subject of

* This account is given by Stæhlin, on the authority of Paulson, surgeon to the court, who died in 1780, aged upwards of 80 years, and may therefore be considered correct; though it is said, in some accounts, that he caught his death by attending the ceremony of the "Benediction of the waters on the Neva."

Peter the Great and his family. This in particular is obviously told, in order to insinuate that the emperor's intention was to nominate his daughter Anne, the count's mistress, as his successor—*Restore all to*—Anne. Indeed this Holstein minister positively asserts that Peter the Great had formed the resolution of raising her to the throne. In all this there can be no great harm; it may be true or it may be otherwise; but his object was to vilify Catharine, and to trump up a story to prove that Peter's affections were entirely alienated from the empress some time before his death.

The story, as told by Bassewitz and the Austrian envoy, is at variance in many points. Catharine, we are assured, had a handsome young chamberlain of the name of Moens or Moêns de la Croix, whose sister Madame de Bâle, or Madame Balke (for they are not agreed even as to her name) was first lady of the bedchamber, according to one, and dresser, according to the other, to the empress. The emperor, being suspicious of a secret connexion between Catharine and Moens, left Petersburg on pretence of visiting a villa for a few days, but privately returned to his winter palace in the capital; from hence, as the story goes, he occasionally sent a confidential page with a complimentary message to the empress, as if he was in the country, with secret orders to observe her motions. From this page's information, the emperor on the third night surprised Catharine in an arbour of the garden with her favourite Moens, while his sister, Madame Balke, was in company with a page upon the watch without the arbour. Peter struck Catharine with his cane,

as well as the page, who endeavoured to prevent him from entering the arbour, and then retired without uttering a single word.

The story would of itself be utterly undeserving of credit, if every act of Peter's life, and every trait in his character, did not give it the lie. That Peter the Great should appoint a page to be a spy on his wife's infidelity, that he should suffer himself to be bearded by a page, that he should be an eye-witness to his wife's intrigues, and satisfy himself by tapping her on the shoulder with his cane, would be to convert the most determined man in the empire into a mere Jerry Sneak. Then indeed might it with sorrow be said, "How are the mighty fallen!" Had any such discovery taken place, it will scarcely be doubted that judging from his hasty and passionate character operating on his infirmities, he would either have been thrown into a fit of catalepsy, or have run all four through the body in as many seconds. Voltaire's account of the only transaction, which could have given the slightest colour to the calumny, is as follows: "These two persons," (the Moenses,) he says, "might be said to govern the empress's household; an accusation was brought against them for receiving presents, and they were imprisoned and brought to trial;" he adds that a "a prohibition had been issued, so long ago as 1714, forbidding all persons in public employments to take presents, under penalty of infamy and death; and that this prohibition had been several times renewed. The brother and sister were convicted; and all who had either purchased or rewarded their services, were named in

the sentence, *except the Duke of Holstein and his minister Count Bassewitz!*" "Perhaps," observes Voltaire, "what presents this prince made to those who had contributed to bring about his marriage were not looked on as criminal." Moens was sentenced to be beheaded, and his sister to receive eleven strokes with the knout: her two sons, a chamberlain and a page, were degraded, and sent to the army in Persia, as common soldiers.

Voltaire adds, "However shocking these severities appear to us, they were perhaps necessary in a country, where the support of the laws seems to require a tremendous rigour. The empress interceded for the lady's pardon, which the emperor refused, and was so offended at the request, that, striking a Venetian pier glass, he said to his consort, 'Thou seest that one blow of my hand can reduce that glass to the dust whence it came.' Catharine with a look of submissive grief, said, 'Well, you have broken one of the most valuable ornaments of your palace, and do you think it will make it the finer?' and these words, with the air which accompanied them, appeased the emperor. Yet all the favour which his consort could obtain was that her dresser should receive only five strokes instead of eleven." Now who is it from whom this story originates?—M. Bassewitz; and Voltaire adds, "This is a fact which I should not relate, were it not attested by a minister, *who was an eye-witness*, and, who, by his presents to the brother and sister, perhaps contributed chiefly to their misfortune*." It would be useless now to inquire

* Voltaire.

into the truth of a story so highly improbable; but Voltaire seems to believe it, because it is told by one who says he was an eye-witness; but, supposing it to be true, what would be the inference? why that the whole story of the garden and the arbour, and the page, was a malicious and "viperous slander," and that Catharine was not only wholly innocent, but utterly unconscious of the breath of suspicion having soiled her fair fame. It would prove first, that a *bonâ fide* trial had taken place of the two delinquents belonging to her household, on a charge of taking bribes for some unlawful purpose, and that Catharine, with her accustomed benevolence and humanity, was pleading for a mitigation of the punishment of the female: and secondly, which is more important, it would prove her innocence, for no human being can possibly imagine that, if guilty, or even accused of infidelity, she would have had the hardihood to plead before her injured husband in behalf of a person who had acted the part of a procuress—"the pander to her dishonour." The calumnious story of the garden may therefore be considered to fall to the ground, and as the malicious invention of Count Bassewitz, or of the person from whom he had it.

But Count Bassewitz has not done yet. It does not appear on what day this exhibition of demolishing the glass took place; but, according to this minister, on the day subsequent to the execution of the sentence, Peter conveyed Catharine, in an open carriage, under the gallows to which was nailed the head of Moens: the empress without

changing colour at this dreadful object, exclaimed, "What a pity it is, that there is so much corruption among courtiers!" Coxe, who relates this, observes that, "as this event was followed by Peter's death, and as Catharine recalled Madame Balke, she was suspected of shortening the days of her husband by poison. But notwithstanding the critical situation of Catharine at the time of his decease, and her subsequent elevation, this charge is destitute of proof."—Mr. Coxe might have added—and of all probability. Voltaire avers that "Catharine had not left his bolster for three nights, and in her arms he expired on the 28th January, about four o'clock in the morning."

There is something in the history of this family of Moens, which is not very clear. Whether the story told by Mrs. Vigors, the wife of the British resident, confirmed by Bruce, and also by General Gordon, respecting the mistress of Peter, of the same name, has any connexion with the Moenses concerned in this transaction, and which dates nearly thirty years from the former, there are now no means of knowing; but it may be remarked that, while it is told in three or four different ways by as many different writers, others who lived at the time, and therefore most likely to be acquainted with what occurred, are wholly silent as to any such transaction,—Nestesuranoi, Mottley, Lacombe, Stæhlin. It has been revived, however, about two years ago by a French general, and told in a style so theatrical, in which Peter is made to perform the character of Othello, in a manner so superlatively ludicrous,

as to divest the story of all possible chance of obtaining belief *.

It may be supposed that, as soon as the breath was out of the body of Peter, the party, and they who composed it were both numerous and respectable, which favoured the son of the unfortunate Tzarovitz, would stand forward to urge his claim to the succession, in opposition to Catharine, whose friends loudly declared that the very act of coronation established her claim. In this short conflict, it may be remarked, not a syllable was uttered by the opposite party against her loyalty and fidelity to her deceased husband, which they would have been most eager to have brought forward, on such an occasion, had there existed the slightest suspicion of any improper conduct on her part. There were, indeed, thrown out some vague insinuations, after she mounted the throne, of her having, as Coxe has observed, "shortened the life of Peter by poison;" but those reports, says Voltaire, "which were scattered abroad, were the mere opinions of some superficial foreigners," (he might have added, of the secretaries and hangers-on of the corps diplomatique), "who without any grounds, wantonly indulge the wretched pleasure of imputing the worst of crimes to those whose interest they suppose it is to commit them." But, as this author very justly adds, "so far was it from being Catharine's interest, that the emperor should be sent out of the world, that his preservation was, of all things, most necessary to her." Catharine in fact

* Histoire de Russie, &c., par Segur.

had no reason to suppose, at least no public reason could be assigned, that Peter ever intended her for the succession; it was contended indeed that the very act of coronation implied this, and more particularly as Peter placed the crown himself on her head; but it does not appear that he ever signified any such intention, or that the coronation conveyed any right to the succession. There were, besides, two heirs to the succession living, his daughter Anne Petrowna, wife to the Duke of Holstein, and his grandson Peter, the issue of the unfortunate Alexis, both of whom had their partisans, and either of whom had a priority of claim to Catharine. It is plain, therefore, that the life and not the death of Peter would be the object of her care and preservation.

Menzikoff, who was well aware that no time was to be lost, assembled the friends of Catharine, while Peter was on the eve of expiring, removed the treasure to the citadel, secured the generals of the guards, and gained over the Archbishop of Novogorod. The empress was summoned from the couch of her dying consort, whose last sighs were breathed in her arms, to appear before the senators, the great officers of state, of bishops, and the officers of the army and navy, and delivered a speech before them, after which the air resounded with "Long live the Empress Catharine!"—a proclamation was immediately issued announcing her accession; and thus Catharine succeeded to the throne, on the very day of her husband's demise.

The body was removed into the great hall of the palace, followed by the imperial family, the

senate, all persons of distinction, and an innumerable train of citizens; it was then laid on a bed of state, and everybody admitted to kiss the hand of the deceased till the day of his interment, which was on the 21st March, 1725. On the 15th of the same month died the princess Natalia Petrowna, the emperor's third daughter by Catharine. The funeral obsequies of the father and daughter were performed together with great pomp and solemnity.

The CHARACTER of Peter the Great, as has been shown in the course of this memoir, was a strange compound of contradictions. Owing to the circumstances in which he was placed, and the determination to execute the plan he had conceived of remodelling the customs and institutions of his country, he had to maintain a constant struggle between his good and evil genius. Nothing was too great, nothing too little for his comprehensive mind. The noblest undertakings were mixed with the most farcical amusements; the most laudable institutions, for the benefit and improvement of his subjects, were followed by shaving their beards and docking their skirts;—kind-hearted, benevolent, and humane, he set no value on human life. Owing to these, and many other incongruities, his character has necessarily been represented in various points of view and

in various colours by his biographers. Of him, however, it can scarcely be said, that

> The evil which men do lives after them,
> The good is oft interred with their bones.

With the exception of a few foreign writers, who have generally compiled their memoirs from polluted sources, the reverse of the aphorism may be applied to Peter. His memory, among his countrymen, who ought to be the best judges, and of whom he was at once the scourge and the benefactor, is held in the highest veneration, and is consecrated in their history and their public monuments to everlasting fame. The magnificent equestrian statue, erected by Catharine II.; the waxen figure of Peter in the museum of the Academy founded by himself; the dress, the sword and the hat, which he wore at the battle of Pultowa, the last pierced through with a ball; the horse that he rode in that battle; the trousers, worsted-stockings, shoes, and cap, which he wore at Zaandam, all in the same apartment; his two favourite dogs, his turning-lathe and tools, with specimens of his workmanship; the iron bar which he forged with his own hand at Olonitz; the Little Grandsire, so carefully preserved as the first germ of the Russian navy; and the wooden hut in which he lived while superintending the first foundation of Petersburg;—these, and a thousand other tangible memorials, all preserved with the utmost care, speak in most intelligible language the opinion which the Russians hold of *the Father of his Country.*

The following is transcribed from the History of Peter the Great, by Major-General Gordon, who had many opportunities of knowing personally, and hearing from others, the leading features of his character :—

"Thus died Peter I., Emperor of Russia, who certainly deserved the epithet GREAT as much as any prince that ever lived. When we consider the method he took to reform his empire; his drawing the natives, by degrees, into a taste of military affairs, beginning himself at the lowest degree to show example to others; his travelling into foreign countries to observe the customs and manners of the inhabitants; his raising, disciplining, and supporting such great armies and fleets; his introducing learning, manufactures, and handicrafts of all kinds; with the great length to which he brought commerce and navigation, things altogether unknown to that people; the prudent measures he took to weaken and reduce his enemies; in short, the reforming his country in every particular, as well the ecclesiastical state as the civil, is so extraordinary, that I do not believe, since the creation of the world, ever monarch was at so great pains, or did the like; and all within the space of thirty years. The great fatigue he underwent, together with his other excesses, shortened his days. He was severe rather than cruel, never pardoned a malefactor, except those of his own blood, and some few of his greatest favourites. He looked upon some things as crimes, which in other countries are not treated with that severity they deserve,—such as concussion and taking of bribes. His leaving the empire to that once mean

woman, Catharine, was a surprise, not only to Russia, but the whole world: yet, considering the great affection and esteem he always had for her, his confidence in her prudence and justice, and the many eminent services she had done him, it was the most prudent step he could take, and nothing less than what he ought to have done; for if he had left the empire to his grandson, Prince Peter, who succeeded her, she and her children had been sent to Siberia, or some worse place, where she would have ended her days in misery; the leaving her in possession of the whole was the only means to make her safe.

"He was at little or no expense about his person; and by living rather like a private gentleman than a prince, he saved wholly that great expense which other monarchs are at in supporting the grandeur of their courts. He was a lover of company and a man of much humour and pleasantry, exceedingly facetious, and of vast natural parts. He took his bottle heartily, so must all the company; for when he was merry himself, he loved to see everybody so; though at the same time he could not endure habitual drinkers. He never kept guards about his person, nor was ever accompanied by above five or six persons, at most. He never could abide ceremony, but loved to be spoken to frankly and without reserve. To sum up all, his fellow never sat upon that throne: and I question very much, if ever another of so great abilities will succeed him*!"

"I viewed," says Coxe, "not without peculiar

* Gordon's History of Peter the Great.

veneration and awe, the sepulchre which contains the body of Peter I.; the sternness, or rather the ferocity, of whose disposition neither spared age, nor sex, nor the dearest connexions: and who yet, with a strong degree of compunction, was accustomed to say, 'I can reform my people, but I cannot reform myself.' A royal historian has justly observed of Peter, that he redeemed the cruelties of a tyrant by the virtues of a legislator. We must readily allow that he considerably reformed and civilised his subjects; that he created a navy and new-modelled his army; that he encouraged the arts and sciences, promoted agriculture and commerce, and laid the foundation of Russian grandeur. But, instead of exclaiming in the language of panegyric,

> Erubesce, ars! Hic vir maximus tibi nihil debuit;
> Exulta, Natura! Hoc stupendium tuum est*—

we may, on the contrary, venture to regret that he was not *taught* the lessons of humanity; that his sublime but unruly genius was not controlled and improved by proper *culture;* nor his savage nature corrected and softened by the refinements of *art.* And if Peter failed in enlightening the mass of his subjects equal to his wishes, the failure was occasioned by his own precipitate temper, by the chimerical idea of introducing the arts and sciences by force, and of performing in a moment what can only be the gradual work of time, by violating the established customs of his people, and, in contradiction to the dictates of

* Blush, Art! this hero owed thee nothing;
Exult, Nature! for this prodigy is all thy own.

sound policy, requiring an immediate sacrifice of prejudices sanctioned by ages. In a word, his failure was the failure of a superior genius wandering without a guide; and the greatest eulogium we can justly offer to his extraordinary character is, to allow that his virtues were his own, and his defects those of education and country *."

Mr. Mottley, in his second edition, has added the following epitaph, which he says he received from his worthy and ingenious friend, *Christopher Wyvill, Esq.*, but does not know whether he was the author of it.

EPITAPHIUM.

Hic jacent
Reliquiæ, vix mortales,
Petri Alexowitz
Russiarum Imperatoris haud opus est dicere,
Honorem enim isti Diademati addidit, non recepit.

Taceat Antiquitas,
Cedat Alexander,
Cedat Cæsar;
Se facilem præbet Victoria
Heroum Ductoribus,
Milites vinci nescios Imperantibus;
Sed Ille,
Qui in morte sola requiescit,

* Travels in Poland, Russia, &c., by W. Coxe, A. M.

Non Famæ avidos,
Non Bello peritissimos,
Non homines Mortem temnentes,
Sed Bruta, vixque humani nominis dignos Subditos
Invenit;
Etiam hos, compatriis ursis simillimos, et aversantes
Expolivit;
Barbaritatis Hæreditariæ tenebras ille Phœbus
Fugavit,
Et propria virtute *Germanorum* Victores vicit.
Alii felicissimè Exercitus duxerunt, hic creavit.
Erubesce, Ars!
Hic Vir maximus tibi nihil debuit:
Exulta, Natura!
Hoc Stupendium tuum est.

[TRANSLATION.]

Here lies all that could die
of the immortal

PETER ALEXIOVITZ;

It is almost superfluous to add,
Emperor of Russia:
A Title
which, instead of adding to his Glory
became glorious by his wearing it.
Let Antiquity be dumb,
nor boast her Alexander,
or her Cæsar;
How easy was Victory
to Leaders who were followed by Heroes,
and whose Soldiers felt a noble Disdain
to be thought less awake than their Generals.

But He,
who in this Place first knew Rest,
found Subjects base and inactive,
unwarlike, — unlearned, — untractable,
neither covetous of Glory,
nor liberal of Danger ;

Creatures with the names of Men,
but with qualities rather brutal than rational.
Yet even These
He polished from their native Ruggedness :

And breaking out, like a new Sun,
to illuminate the Minds of a People,
dispelled their Night of hereditary Darkness :
Till, by Force of his invincible Influence,
He had taught them to conquer
even the Conquerors of Germany !
Other Princes have commanded victorious Armies :
This Commander created them !
Blush, O Art !
At a Hero, who owed Thee Nothing ;

Exult, O Nature !
For Thine was this Prodigy.

THE END.

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